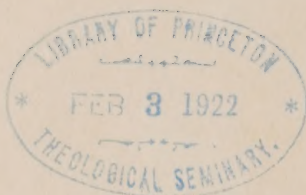


The Comfort  
of the  
Catholic Faith.



BT 999 .C5

Clendenin, Frank Montrose,  
1853-

The comfort of the catholic  
faith





**THE COMFORT OF THE  
CATHOLIC FAITH**





# THE COMFORT OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH

BY THE

Rev. FRANK M. CLENDENIN, D.D.

AUTHOR OF "IDOLS BY THE SEA," AND OTHER ESSAYS

Comfort Ye—Comfort Ye My People  
*Isaiah xl. 1.*

"Religion cannot pass away—The burning of a  
little straw may hide the stars of the sky;  
but the stars are there and will reappear."

—*Ending of Carlyle's Essay on Voltaire.*

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

FOURTH AVENUE & 30TH STREET, NEW YORK

39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON

BOMBAY, CALCUTTA, AND MADRAS

1921

COPYRIGHT, 1921, BY  
LONGMANS, GREEN & CO.

---

*All Rights Reserved*

*Printed in the United States*

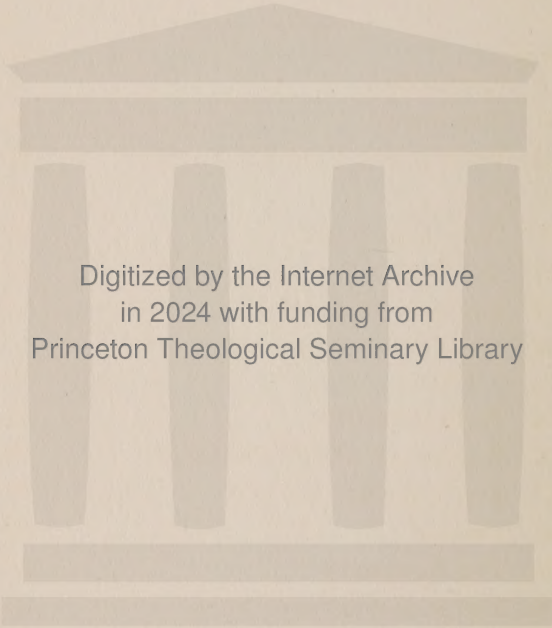


IN LOVING AND REVERENT MEMORY OF  
FREDERICK WILLIAM ROBERTSON  
HENRY PARRY LIDDON  
JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

THE THREE WHOSE WRITINGS  
HAVE SO LARGELY INFLUENCED MY LIFE

AND

WHO HAVING PASSED INTO THE "KINDLY LIGHT" OF GOD  
ARE NOW NO LONGER "FAR FROM HOME"



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2024 with funding from  
Princeton Theological Seminary Library

# CONTENTS

---

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	KNOWLEDGE . . . . .	3
II	PHILOSOPHY . . . . .	13
III	WHAT IS THE CATHOLIC FAITH . .	21
IV	"I" . . . . .	29
V	DOES GOD CARE . . . . .	35
VI	AND IN ONE GOD JESUS CHRIST . .	43
VII	AND WAS MADE MAN . . . . .	53
VIII	THE JUDGE OF THE QUICK AND THE DEAD . . . . .	69
IX	THE COMFORTER . . . . .	79
X	WHO SPAKE BY THE PROPHETS . .	87
XI	THE CATHOLIC CHURCH . . . . .	99
XII	PRAYER . . . . .	109
XIII	THE EUCHARIST . . . . .	119
XIV	THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS . . . .	131
XV	THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE .	141
XVI	LIFE AND ITS MYSTERY . . . . .	153
XVII	THE LIFE EVERLASTING . . . . .	161

A few of the pages of this volume are found in other writings of the author but are printed here because of their harmony with "The Comfort of the Catholic Faith."

---

Quotations, meant to confirm the statements of the chapters are in most books placed at the end of the volume *where no one reads them*. In this book they follow each chapter and are well worth reading, whether the book is or not.

## FOREWORD

WHETHER or not this book will be read by anyone a year hence or be known by anyone a hundred years hence the future alone can answer, but I take a deep satisfaction in the belief that the teachings of this book will survive the deadening power of time and will rule the thoughts and inspire the actions of men until humanity has run its course on earth. This I hold as evident, because the Catholic Faith is not of man's creation, but instead is that which we have "received." The Spirit from on High which gave it to men will guard it safely "until the evening." Relentless persecution raged about it in the first centuries. Later, subtle error beguiled and led to spiritual wreck some of its ablest and mightest defenders. Then the hordes of Barbarism came down upon it like a wolf on the fold—strife and division rent its ranks. Success and luxury rotted it almost to the heart; and now the madness of a divided Christendom holds it up to the shame and mocking of an unbelieving world.

From the days when the aged Simeon said of Christ our LORD "The same is set for a sign that shall be spoken against," from the days when Lucian poured out his scorn upon the whole Christian Faith as "the latest folly in the world's great madhouse" down to the day when Prof. William James of Harvard said "Dualistic theism [meaning Christianity] is disappearing from British and American Universities" the attack upon that Faith has been constant. But it lives on. It will live on because the Man of the Passion was also the God of the Resurrection. He said HE would be with us always even unto the end of the world. His words are inviolate.

I desire to acknowledge the kindness of the Rev. Emmons Parkman Burrill and the Rev. Dr. William H. van Allen for having read through a number of the proof sheets of this book and for having made helpful suggestions regarding the same. Neither of these dear friends are, of course, responsible for my departure in one instance from what may seem to some traditional belief.

REBOBOTH HOUSE,  
CHAPPAQUA,  
NEW YORK.



## TO THE MAN IN THE STREET

GREETINGS to you, my brother—you who bear bravely and uncomplainingly the many burdens of home and social and business life, thinking sometimes—a little sadly perhaps—of the Great Adventure coming nearer to us all each day and which you would gladly meet with a sure Faith if it might be found.

That you are without faith I feel we Christians are in large measure to blame; many of us have set you an inconsistent and discouraging example; we have failed to agree among ourselves and have looked out on the world in a narrow and prejudiced way. I hope that this book may show that our agreement upon the great essentials is deeper and more widespread than is generally thought and that our sympathy with men who doubt the foundation of things is sincere and heartfelt.

The babble of the many voices about us is, I know, very confusing and, one is almost ready to give up in despair, but the Light does come to the man who seeks it and with it the Faith once for all delivered to the saints, the Faith which is an anchor to hold us in temptation, the Faith which will reveal to us the Pilot face to face when we have crossed the bar.

## The Catholic Faith

I believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And of all things visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God; Begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God; Begotten, not made; Being of one substance with the Father; By whom all things were made: Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, And was made man: And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures; And ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of the Father: And He shall come again with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, The Lord, and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father; Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; Who spake by the Prophets: And I believe One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church: I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins: And I look for the Resurrection of the dead: And the Life of the world to come. Amen.

## THE CATHOLIC FAITH

This is the Faith of the entire Church—Roman, Greek and Anglican—some parts of the Church may require more to be believed but all alike accept this Faith. It is also the belief of the chief part of those who call themselves Protestants but who by their Baptism with water in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost are members of the Catholic Church.

This is the Faith held always, everywhere and by all—*Quod semper, quod ubique et quod ab omnibus.*

Thus is verified the words of the Te Deum —“The Holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge Thee.”

“To this day it [the Nicene Creed] is sung in all countries of the civilized world, and so long as faith in the eternal Deity of Christ lives, the Council of Nicaea will be named with reverence and with gratitude.”

Schaff, Hist. of the Creeds, II, Page 652.

## “WAKE AGAIN!”

Wake again, Teutonic father-ages,  
Speak again, beloved primeval Creeds;  
Flash ancestral spirit from your pages,  
Wake the greedy age to noble deeds.

Tell us how, of old, our saintly mothers  
Schooled themselves by vigil, fast, and prayer;  
Learnt to love as Jesus loved before them,  
While they bore the Cross which good men bear.

Tell us how our stout crusading fathers  
Fought and died for God, and not for gold;  
Let their love, their Faith, their dauntless daring,  
Distance-mellowed, gild the days of old.

Tell us how the ceaseless workers, thronging,  
Angel-tended, round the convent-doors,  
Wrought to Christian Faith and holy order  
Savage hearts alike and barren moors.

Ye who built the Churches where we worship,  
Ye who framed the laws by which we move  
Fathers, long belied and long forsaken,  
Oh, forgive the children of your love!

REV. CHARLES KINGSLEY.



## KNOWLEDGE

When you know a thing, to hold that you know it; and when you do not know a thing, to allow that you do not know it; this is knowledge.

CONFUCIUS, *Analects*, Bk. I.



## CHAPTER I

### KNOWLEDGE

WE owe to knowledge a vast debt—it has opened many doors, it has let the light fall on many dark corners, it has cleared the way for many good works, it has confirmed many of the Sacred Records and has found again for us the lost truth of God's immanence in Nature.

In its search for truth it has spared no expense, it has feared no danger—the minute and the vast are to knowledge both alike—sea and land and sky are each in the sweep of its vision. In its efforts to find the meaning and make clear the mystery of life it has shown that which draws near to the martyr spirit; but with all its wonderful advance and development it still stands with folded hands—quite helpless—before what we all want most to know—“What is life? What is death? What is matter? If a man die shall he live again?” To these tre-

mendous questions knowledge, however profound, has no answer.

Then also if the Faith rested upon knowledge it would constantly have to change, for a book of knowledge is barely out of print before it is out of date.

The uncertainty of knowledge is clearly shown in the different theories men of learning have set forth as to the origin of the world. Thales the great Ionian, the wise man of Miletus, Master of Egyptian and Chaldean philosophy, brought his Cosmos out of water.

Anaximenes said air was the mother of all and eternal in its motion. Heraclitus, the wise man of Ephesus, taught that life and the world came up on the flames of fire. Empedocles gave to the "four elements" the power over all things and this theory had the imprimatur of Plato. Anaximander said that condensation and rarefaction explained all things. Leucippus held firmly that weight and gravity opened up the secrets of nature. Francis Bacon, Lord of Verulam, wisest of all sages before him, said the earth was flat and the stars passed over it every night. Then as the days and years went on came the

Nebular Hypothesis, which seemed for a time the long-sought solution of things, but now some of the men of learning say the Nebular Hypothesis "survives only as a wreck." So all things are full of change. The whole universe is in motion—swinging through endless space we go no man knows where, every particle of matter is moving somewhere. On earth nothing of knowledge is settled. Yesterday we said "we know." To-day the knowledge of yesterday must be revised or restated. When we had matter down to atoms and molecules we felt we had closed upon it, but the doctrine of electrons came along and threw that fiat into thin air. Now comes the doctrine of relativity, which calls for the remeasurement of all tables and standards and makes possible the Fourth Dimension.

In the midst of all this surrounding restlessness what a stay and satisfaction is the belief that the Faith is the Faith "once for all delivered to the Saints." In the words of the great Apostle "I have received of the LORD that which I also deliver unto you." The Church may from time to time give a fuller, clearer explanation of the

Faith, as the Nicene is a fuller creed than the Apostle's, but both Creeds are the same Faith. We want then more than knowledge has to give. We want a Revelation from on High and the Christian Faith gives such a Revelation in the Person and Character of Jesus Christ our LORD. The deepest knowledge the world has to give often deceives us. Was it Balfour who spoke of "our ignorance of what we know best, our blindness in what we see most clearly"? It is like the light of day which leaves us in a very shut-in world; it is only when night comes that through the darkness we see the far-off worlds beyond.

---

The man of faith does not affirm the uselessness of earthly wisdom, but he does affirm that it has utterly failed to find out and know the true and living God. However useful and valuable the Wisdom of this World may be in its appropriate sphere, it has never yet given to men that knowledge of God upon which his soul could rest in satisfaction and peace. The world by wisdom has never known God. At no time, in no country, among no people, has man, by wisdom, ever been able to make

God known to his fellow men. Without the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, the true and living God has ever been the "Unknown God."

The wise men of this generation are not backward in boasting of the world's present progress and wisdom, and yet the history and ruins of the old world, before the coming of our Lord, reveal evidences of a civilization that will bear all the lights and tests of our day.

Egypt speaks out to this self-satisfied generation in her mummied kings, her silent Sphinx, her matchless pyramids. Egypt, that could lift monster stones four hundred feet in the air, and adjust them to a mathematical line and not vary a half a hair's breadth; that could paint on glass, grind gold to dust, embalm the body so to make flesh immortal; that built gigantic houses of stone that have outlived all nations and civilizations—this nation was wise in all the Wisdom of this World. And yet this grand old civilization lived and died in gross and utter ignorance of the one true and living God. The religion of the wisest men of On and Memphis was Negritian fetishism, the

lowest kind of Nature worship. The people bowed down and worshipped the Nile, the ox, the trees, the hills, and birds, four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Egypt had wise priests, her magnificent temples, her gorgeous worship; but all was of the earth, earthy. She knew not God.

Subsequently to Egypt there arose four great world powers, following each other in succession, claiming and exercising universal dominion, and gathering unto themselves the civilization and glory of the known world—Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. Four Kingdoms seen in dream by the great Nebuchadnezzar—the image with the head of gold, breast of silver, belly of brass, legs of iron, feet partly of iron and part of clay, and interpreted by Daniel as the four kingdoms above named. But not one or all of these nations ever attained unto that knowledge of God the heart of man craves.

The bricks of Babylon, the purple of Tyre, the army of Xerxes, the conquests of Alexander, the legions of Rome, the poetry of Homer, the philosophy of Socrates, the statues of Phidias, the orations of Cicero, the satires of Juvenal, the annals of Tacitus



—these are the drifts from the waves of that ancient civilization, wise in all the Wisdom of this World; these are the drifts still floating on the current of human history as it moves on its majestic course to that eternity where time is not measured by days and nights, and weeks and years; and to that infinity where space is not measured by continents and seas.

There were walls seventy feet high, on which war-chariots might be driven four abreast; there were temples of polished marble, overlaid with ivory and gold; there were statues so lifelike as almost to speak; there were highways, firm and hard, stretching from imperial Rome to all the ends of the known world; there were arches and aqueducts, fountains and baths, painting and poetry. But upon that civilization might have been written the inscription of the altar at Mars Hill, “To the Unknown God.”

—Rev. A. W. Pitzer, D.D.



# PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy triumphs easily over past and future  
evils;

But present evils triumph over Philosophy.

LORD BACON.

## CHAPTER II

### PHILOSOPHY

It is a comfort to know that our Faith does not rest even upon Philosophy, and in the world Philosophy is esteemed above all other intellectual attainments. Since the first days of history it has been so regarded.

Philosophy is the attempt to devise by human reason an explanation of the Universe but after thousands of years of effort the attempt fails to clear life, death and the world of their mystery.

To begin with, Philosophers cannot agree among themselves as to what is true, spending much of their time and space in attack and counter attack.

Many forms of Philosophy refuse to recognize as true anything which cannot be explained. This rules out of court nearly all that concerns life from electricity to personality, from gravitation to Religion.

Religion has to do with the infinite and we have only finite minds to grasp it. In

simple statement we can apprehend God. We cannot comprehend Him.

The truths of Religion do not contradict, but they transcend reason, yet they are "believable" in the best sense of the world. This is the testimony of as clear and doubting a mind as Huxley's.

It was in 1877 he said, "I have not the slightest objection to offer a priori to all the propositions of the Creeds. The mysteries of the Church are child's play compared with the mysteries of Nature. The doctrine of the Trinity is not more puzzling than the necessary antinomies of physical speculation." "Ultimate scientific ideas," said Herbert Spencer, "are unthinkable."

Other Philosophies assert that God and the hereafter are not only among the unknown things of the universe but that they are "unknowable." This claim can only be held upon the tremendous assumption that they already know all that can be known. It is the proud assumption that what they do not know now cannot be known. To this Prof. James of Harvard who himself was one of the world's greatest philosophers makes answer: "Our Science is a drop—our



ignorance a sea. Whatever else is certain this at least is certain—that the world of our present knowledge *is* enveloped in a larger world of *some* sort of whose residual properties we *at present* can frame no positive idea.”

Other Philosophers admit there is a God, but make God and the Universe one and that the human and Divine substance are the same. This makes God the partner in all the evil of the world; this makes God “*particeps criminis*” in all the crimes of history.

The problem of the Faith is not in miracles or in other showing of the miraculous but in the admission of the existence of a personal God separate from the world.

The one who swings Arcturus on its way and holds the Pleiades in their bright cluster has no need of proof to know He rules the earth.

After long centuries of profound search and study the verdict of Philosophy is that there is no evidence that back of all there is any ONE who really cares what becomes of us “insects of an hour.”

In the brave but pathetic words of Fitz

James Stephen: "What do you think of yourself? What do you think of the world? These are questions with which all must deal as it seems good to them. Each must act as he thinks best and if he is wrong so much the worse for him.

"We stand on a mountain pass in the midst of whirling snow and blinding mist, through which we get glimpses now and then of paths which may be deceptive.

"If we stand still we shall be frozen to death. If we take the wrong road we shall be dashed to pieces. We do not certainly know whether there is any right one. What must we do? 'Be strong and of a good courage,' act for the best, hope for the best and take what comes. If death ends all, we cannot meet death better." Or in the more pathetic words of John Stuart Mill:

"In the times when mankind were nearer to their natural state, cultivated observers regarded the natural man as a sort of wild animal, distinguished chiefly by being craftier than the other beasts of the field; and all worth of character was deemed the result of a sort of taming, a phrase often applied by

the ancient philosopher to the appropriate discipline of human beings. The most criminal actions are to a being like man not more unnatural than most of the virtues. The mere cessation of existence is no evil to any one; the idea is only formidable through the illusion of imagination: though the loss of friends, dying before us will always suffice to keep alive in the most sensitive natures the imaginative hope of a futurity, which, if there is nothing to prove, there is as little in our knowledge and experience to contradict. It seems to me not only possible but probable, that in the higher, and above all a happier condition of human life, not annihilation but immortality may be the burdensome idea." "Essays on Religion," New York ed., 1874: pp. 48, 62, 122.

It was of Mill that Holyoake wrote: "No more generous, self-reliant, self-regardless thinker than he ever entered the adventurous pass of Death." (Essay on Mill: London, 1873: p. 29.)



WHAT IS THE CATHOLIC FAITH?

Perfect Personality is in God alone.

LOTZE.

## CHAPTER III

### WHAT IS THE CATHOLIC FAITH?

THE Catholic Faith is Faith in a Person who has always lived—a Person who lived long ago here upon the earth, who is living now, who will live through eternity. It is Faith in a Person of Whom there is no historical doubt. He lived and died in the midst of the world and His human life divides the world's history. All events are before Christ or after Christ—each time we write “1921” we bear testimony that He once lived here upon earth.

He was a Person distinctly human. Born of a woman, as a little child weak and helpless and homeless held in his Mother's arms:

To whom caressing and caressed  
Clings the Eternal Child,

carried to a far off country to escape the King who would slay him; living many quiet years in a humble home in the midst of those many dangers that beset any human life; coming to the temple for His Confirmation;



boyhood passing into manhood and then daily toil and work "until the evening." As a man He took interest not only in what concerns man but in everything of earth and of heaven—the birds of the air, the flowers of the field, the blue of the sky, the waters of the sea. Little children seemed very near to Him. He took them in His arms and blessed them. The joys of life were near to Him. He blessed a wedding by His presence. The sorrows of life were near to him, He stood by a grave and wept. All the vicissitudes of life touched Him, nothing was alien to Him that was human and yet—there was about Him something more than human—for under His hand nature was restrained. Nature is often pictured in its soft lights, in what is quiet and beautiful but down at the heart of things nature is ruthless, a giant force of destruction. Before nature all life sooner or later goes down and sinks into dust and nothingness but this man said to the sea, never still, "Be still," and there was a great calm. He said before the inroads of disease "Take up thy bed and walk." He said to the earth which buries all, "Give up thy dead," and the dead came forth.

He was something more than human for it is human to miss the mark. With every nation, kindred and people it is the sad acknowledgment that they have done that which they ought not to have done and left undone that which they ought to have done, but this Man never admitted having missed the mark. While showing tenderest sympathy with those who sinned yet He Himself admits of no sin. He turns instead to His generation and to all generations with the tremendous question: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" and no one then or since has answered Him.

Moreover this man said: "He knew all men and needed not that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man." We all carry an inner life of which no one knows. We have thoughts and ideals which for one reason or another we never reveal but to this man we are all known. His loving heart beats with ours whether we walk aright or wander from the way. Whether we live near or in some far off place He goes with us to the journey's end.

O'er moor and fen, O'er crag and torrent, till  
The night is gone.

As man moreover He went forth to meet death as we all must meet it face to face and “the face to face” filled Him with agony. As man He yielded to death and as man He rose from the dead. In His risen body He spoke to many men and women and then after forty days on earth as Man He stretched out His arms over His disciples and blessing them He ascended into Heaven, there as Man as well as God forever to make intercession for us.

This then is the comfort of the Catholic Faith that it is belief in a Person—a Person who was man’s Friend centuries ago, who is man’s Friend to-day—who will be man’s Friend when eternity has piled itself upon eternity.

---

It is only in a person that a creed can be truly preserved. Sundered from a person the creed becomes a series of interesting speculations, or a voiceless assemblage of lifeless dogmas. It is only in a Person that morality can be vitalized. Morality without a Person becomes at best a cold convention or an inherited necessity. But with a Person, faith and morals alike live and are kept alive.

We can have a creed without a Person and a code without a Person; but when we have the Person we possess both a creed and a code. The creed is what we believe of Him; His character becomes itself a code of morals. It is in the thought of One, of whom we may say, "He is," that we find the life of faith and the life of morals.

In persons centre all the deepest and most abiding interest of this world's mingled story of sorrow and joy. The drama may be old or new, but the strong and undying interest is in the characters who walk the stage. From persons radiate the powers which have made history. Thought is great; but thought is powerless till it is wedded with the man who gives it expression.

The eager and shallow dogmatist who worshipped not God, but clung vehemently and immorally to his creed, demanded intellectual assent. Heedless of the need of intellectual honesty, or of the ethical significance of the creed, he saw no alternative between the declaration of assent to a theological proposition and the eternal damnation of a human soul. He made it possible for men to say, and to say it with a measure of truth, that

orthodoxy was the sin against the Holy Ghost. No era of the Church's history, perhaps, is wholly free from this fatal mistake; no party in the Church is without need of guarding against it. When men say of anything—Creed, Book, Ordinance,—“It can save us,” then the downward road towards fetishism has begun. Men, devout and pious in their way, write religious books about the Bible, or the Creed or the Sacraments, and they scatter their pages with profane capital letters when they speak of what It can do for men. This is perilously near rank and degraded fetishism! It is certainly heresy. There is no power in the Creed to help man, except in so far as the Creed reveals to man a Person who can help. There is no power in the Bible to help man, except in so far as it reveals Him who has never left the world without His present aid. There is no power in the Blessed Sacrament to help man, except in so far as He is made known to us in the breaking of that Bread.—Bishop Boyd Carpenter, in “Permanent Elements of Religion,” p. 274.

“I”

Is He not all but thou that hast power to feel,  
I am I?

TENNYSON, Higher Pantheism.



## CHAPTER IV

“I”

“A VERY common word; for we are using it all day long when we are awake, and even at night in our dreams; and yet a wonderful word for though we know well whom it means yet what it means we do not know and cannot understand, no, nor can the wisest philosopher who ever lived; and a most important word too; for we cannot get rid of it, cannot help thinking of it, cannot help saying it all our life long from childhood to the grave.

“If the whole universe, sun, moon, and stars, and all that we ever thought of or can think of were destroyed or became as nothing that word would probably be left and we should be left alone with it and on what we meant by that little word would depend our lasting happiness.”

Such is what Charles Kingsley wrote regarding the first word of the Creed. It is

the word which holds us together and keeps our identity through the years. Though the body change many times so that in age not one atom of the body of youth is left, the "I," the personality of life remains.

All things change but not our personality—water evaporates and turns to rain again, the plants and flowers live and die, the seasons come and go, governments rise and fall, the stars blaze out and fade away, but through it all the "I" of life remains the same.

Personality moreover is the door through which all knowledge passes; time and space, matter and force, cause and effect, love and hate have no meaning except in the light of our personal experience—it is the one real thing we know and by it we estimate the reality of all things.

"I" takes in the outer world of men and things and makes it a part of itself, the sky, the fields, the face of the little child—the coming of the Spring time, the trend of armies, the downfall of a race.

"I" is sometimes stirred by some heroic act or work and the heart beats faster—"I" is sometimes bowed down by sorrow, or deep

remorse and the heart beats slower. We know by these things that “I” is not dust nor clay but something spiritual—something profoundly deeper and more lasting than the body.

We know further that no power on earth can keep “I” from being what it wants to be—no cloud can smother it, no force annihilate it. Briefly “I” after God is the greatest thing in the world for the simple reason that “I” was called out of eternity and placed in the world to do some special work for God and for the added reason that having done this work “I” is to go thereafter and live as long as God.

“I” indeed sounds the abyss of our being and the comfort that is possible in such a belief is wonderfully outlined by S. Augustine.

“I come to the spacious fields and palaces of memory, wherein are treasured unnumbered images of things of sense, and all our thoughts about them. There in that vast court of memory are present to me heaven, earth, sea, and all that I can think upon, all that I have forgotten therein. There, too, I meet myself, and whatever I have felt and done, my experiences, my beliefs, my hopes

and plans for the years to come. Great is this power of memory, exceeding great, O God. Who has ever fathomed its abyss? And yet this power is mine, a part of my very nature, nor can I comprehend all that I myself really am. Great is this power of memory, a wondrous thing, O my God, in all its depth and manifold immensity, and this thing is my mind and this mind is myself. Fear and amazement overcome me when I think of it. And yet men go abroad to gaze upon the mountains and the waves, the broad rivers, the wide ocean, the courses of the stars, and pass themselves, the crowning wonder, by."

DOES GOD CARE?

“You have not seen,” says a great writer and profound thinker, “The greatest gift of all—the Heart of God, the love of His heart—the Heart of His love—and will He in very deed show us that? Yes, unveil the Cross and see.”

LACORDAIRE.

## CHAPTER V

### DOES GOD CARE?

“If I thought that God really cared I could bear it.” The woman had been through deep waters and there seemed no bottom to anything. The skies had turned to brass and the earth was desolate.

Through all time this has been the doubt of many hearts when sorrow and desolation came. This explains why the Church tells us to say “I believe in God the Father” for a father really cares for what happens to His children, the children made in His own image.

“Show us the Father and it sufficeth us,” said the Apostle. This had been the unquenchable and unconquerable hope of Israel. “O that thou wouldst rend the Heavens and Come down,” said the Psalmist. “Bow thy Heavens and come down,” said the prophet, and the answer given even in those olden

days was that God was not in the earthquake that broke the rocks nor in the fire that swallowed up plain and forest but in the still soft voice.

“Show us the Father” is the indestructible need of humanity, the prayer of all religions, “the great diapason which is the echo of a world divine” the God instinct which grows out of being “partakers of the divine nature.”

The answer of our LORD is clear as it is awful (full of awe). “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.” All the teachings of our LORD’s earthly life had been directed to that end—to show men God the Father. When men asked him how to pray He said say, “Our Father”—Our Heavenly Father. “If ye being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven give good gifts to them that ask Him.” All the tenderness now stored up in the name “mother” was of old found in the name “Father.” In our LORD’s early ministry He often spoke in proverbs but He said, “The time cometh when I shall show you plainly of the Father,” and that time came in the supreme



words "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

God is our Father in allowing us to come to Him in all our necessities "Because ye are sons God hath sent forth the spirit of His son unto your hearts crying Abba, Father."

God is our Father in caring for all our wants—"Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"

God is our Father in feeling with us in every sorrow and misfortune "Like as a Father pitieth his children; so the LORD pitieth them that fear Him. For he knoweth our frame. He remembereth we are dust." God is our Father in making sure the future when this life is over "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."

The man who believes in a God like this is never alone. Nothing appears to him empty or desolate. The vacant room, the deserted house, the widespread desert, the limitless sky have in them all a Presence he can love and adore. "He feels the heart of infinite

Love beating close to his heart and throbbing through all the pulses of the universe."

The answer of our LORD has therefore its supreme place in history telling that the One who reveals the Fatherhood of God has lived here upon the earth, that human ears have heard Him, that human hands have touched Him, that human eyes have seen Him face to face and that this love of God is a real, powerful living thing of infinite pity and eternal charity—telling us this charity has lost nothing of its divine immensity, of its world embracing breadth, of its eternal duration.

This was the teaching of Jesus Christ our LORD from the beginning of His ministry to the day when from out of the Body upon the Cross He said, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." Yea beyond the Cross it goes and standing in this same Body but now risen from the Dead He speaks to His disciples "As my Father hath sent Me even so I send you." "Whosoever sins thou dost forgive they are forgiven."

Back then of the mystery of life, its chaos, its sorrow, its confusion, its tragedy is lifted up the Cross of Calvary ever telling us that

God Himself is in the midst of the "Creation that groaneth and travaileth in pain together," ever telling us that out of death cometh life—that sorrow may endure for the night but "joy cometh in the morning."



AND IN ONE GOD JESUS CHRIST

In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word  
was with God, and the Word was God.

SAINT JOHN I, 1.

## CHAPTER VI

### "AND IN ONE LORD JESUS CHRIST"

"WHOM do men say that I am?" The answer to this question of our LORD is the heart of our religion. It is the all in all of Christianity. Compared to it all other questions are as nothing for we believe in nothing less than that Jesus of Nazareth, the Man who took little children in His arms and blessed them, the Man who wept at the grave of Lazarus, the Man who suffered under Pontius Pilate is God as well as man.

If He were God He is God as well as man still and the meaning and mystery of life is clear. If He were not God as well as man then Christianity is a huge deception and is not worth the zephyr that blew over the last dying flower.

We may do well therefore to recall again why we believe He was God. "I and the Father are one." "He who hath seen me hath seen that Father." This is the appal-

ling testimony He gives of Himself but no sane man before or since ever made such a claim.

When before the most solemn Court of His day the high priest said "I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou be Christ, the Son of God." Jesus said unto him, "Thou hast said." And at this "blasphemy" the high priest rent his clothes.

Our LORD claimed absolute power in dealing with every question of moral duty and destiny. In the sermon of the Mount He contrasts His rulings with the ancient law and seven times in one chapter He rises above the ancient law with the words "But I say unto you" and declares him only wise and built upon a rock who hears His sayings and doeth them.

He ever speaks as if He were the Author and Giver of the Law. The Sabbath was the symbol of the covenant made by God with Israel but our LORD asserts complete supremacy over this most sacred day with the words "For the son of man is LORD also of the Sabbath day."

In the Church all things are done according to His will and He tells the Apostles to bap-



tize in His name and to teach their converts “all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” This authority extends into Heaven itself. “To him that overcometh will I grant to set with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne.” Throughout the last great book of the Bible our LORD is never among the worshippers but instead He is the worshipped One on the throne. “And with that picture the majestic vision closes.”

“He who claims supremacy, absolute and indisputable, in morals, in divine institutions, in the Church on earth, in Heaven and in a consummated universe forever, must be LORD of all, manifest in human form. If he were not *what* must He have been to advance such presumptions, and what must the Book be which enforces them?”

Our LORD claimed the power to forgive sins. Now if he were only a man the Jews were fully right in what they said, “This man blasphemeth, who can forgive sins but God only.” Then he said, “That ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins (He said unto the sick of the palsy) I say unto thee arise and take up thy couch

and go unto thy house" and the sick man arose. Even far beyond this He goes and delegates this power to fallen men saying on the first Easter night. "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosoever sins ye forgive they are forgiven." Who but God himself can delegate the power to forgive in God's name?

Our LORD puts faith in Himself the same as faith in God the Father. "Ye believe in God, believe also in me."

The way to God is through Him. "I am the way, I am the truth, I am the Life." "I am the resurrection and the life."

Our LORD makes Himself the centre of rest for the human soul, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." In God alone is rest.

It was long ago St. Augustine said it but the words are forever true. "Restless are our hearts, O God, until they rest in thee."

In like spirit are those wonderful verses in which He speaks of our peace. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you.

Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

Then comes His last promise, “Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Only God can be with us always. The dearest and the best must part from us at last, only God can go with us to and through the Great Adventure.

“There is a Man whose tomb is guarded by love, whose sepulchre is not only glorious, as a prophet declared, but whose sepulchre is loved. There is a Man whose ashes, after eighteen centuries, have not grown cold, who daily lives again in the thoughts of an innumerable multitude of men; who is visited in his cradle by shepherds and by kings, who vie with each other in bringing to him gold and frankincense and myrrh. There is a Man whose steps are unweariedly retrodden by a large portion of mankind, and who, although no longer present, is followed by that throng in all the scenes of his bygone pilgrimage, upon the knees of his mother, by the borders of the lake, to the top of the mountains, in the by-ways of the valleys, under the shade of the olive trees, in the still solitude of the

deserts. The greatest monuments of art shelter his sacred images; the most magnificent ceremonies assemble the people under the influence of his name; poetry, music, painting, sculpture, exhaust their resources to proclaim his glory, and to offer him incense worthy of the adoration which ages have consecrated to him. And yet upon what throne do they adore him? Upon a Cross!" (Lacordaire: *Conferences*; London ed., 1869, pp. 82-3, 86-7.)

"It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal Character, which through all the changes of eighteen centuries has inspired the hearts of men with an impassioned love, has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments, and conditions, has been not only the highest pattern of virtue but the strongest incentive to its practice, and has exercised so deep an influence that it may be truly said that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and to soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers, and all the exhortations of moralists. This has indeed been the well-

spring of whatever is best and purest in the Christian life. The power of the love of Christ has been displayed alike in the most heroic pages of Christian martyrdom, in the most pathetic pages of Christian resignation, in the tenderest pages of Christian charity.” (Lecky: “Hist. of European Morals”; ed., 1876, vol. 2, pp. 9, 10.



AND WAS MADE MAN

'Twas much, that man was made like God before ;  
But, that God should be made like man, much more.  
DONNE, Holy Sonnets.



## CHAPTER VII

### AND WAS MADE MAN

“Who for us men, and for our Salvation came down from Heaven and was Incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man.” And then in memory of all these words describe we kneel.

In his essay upon Milton, Lord Macaulay tells us that the greatness of the English Dante lies in his power to leave some things unsaid and undescribed. Milton suggests, gives at times the outlines of some majestic figure, but a vast part of his picture is untouched and the mind and imagination can finish the painting and give it that form and color it may be able to conceive and select. It is also to be remembered that Dante himself, catching the first gleams of that white Light which sweep from the Beatific Vision, brings at once his immortal poem to its close. The perfect union of man's will with God's will, the oneness of the Light of the Infinite

with the darkness of the Finite, Dante felt no human voice could express. The poetic genius which, with bold and glaring strokes described Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise, which never for one moment hesitated to sing of the most sacred joy or to delineate the most awful passion stood before the Incarnation with dropped hands and bowed head because the great Italian knew that even the mystic might of Epic poetry had not power to body into words the Divine Mystery of Very God becoming Very Man.

Rightly, therefore, has fame ranked the solemn Tuscan with the immortal writer of the Iliad, because Dante knew with Homer the eloquent expressiveness of silence. It is also worthy of remembrance that when the wise men came to worship the God child there is no record that they uttered word or line. They presented Him their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, they fell down and worshipped Him, but there is no statement of any one either hearing or preaching a sermon or attempting to explain that which could not be explained. Wise men indeed, wiser than we word beaten men of modern centuries can imagine.

For speaking as men speak, nothing is more contrary to human reason and experience than the Mystery of the Incarnation, which means God made man. It strains even the imagination to suppose God would limit and localize His Eternal Presence as the Incarnation did limit and localize Him. Had God risen from the depth of the sea, or from cut the radiance of the rising sun had first in human form looked upon His wondering world, it would have seemed somewhat in harmony with His attributes. Had God come in His glory with all His angels with Him, had He come with the rolling suns for His chariot, with light for His garment, with the white and milky stretch of the universe for His pageant, it would have been in keeping with that Royal and Omnipotent Ruler who gives the red glare to the war star, who makes white the light of Sirius, and who pales to silver softness the far distant Alcyone, but this limitation in absolute weakness to the body of a poor and helpless girl, this being born in the place where only the humble cattle lived is a fact we say that, according to our human idea of things, is in the highest degree improbable. To be, to exist

in human form, that alone is against every expectation of our minds, to be born into a body that time and tide could wear out and fill with pain, into a body that men could curse and the mob crucify. No humanly conceived system would ever have dared thus strike against the face of all that the human intellect felt was proper and appropriate to the advent of Almighty God. And is not this the lesson of it all?

That God's presence is where *He* has declared it to be, and not where *we* think it ought to be? That it is where God has thought wise to have it and not always where *we* feel it is. Those Jews of old had settled idea where the Messiah ought to be born, when He must come, how He must come. In the Hebrew mind to be born and to be worshipped in a stall where cattle lived and died was the last thing on earth to be imagined, not to speak of being believed. The thought of such a humiliation, of such a lowering of the dignity of God to a devout Jew was irreverent, abhorrent, terrible. The Hebrew people as a Nation, therefore, laughed at the story of Christ's birth, mocked His life and crucified Him for what seemed to them irrev-

erence and blasphemy. "He came unto His own and His own received Him not." Does it ever come to us to meditate how likely it is that we would have acted as the Jews of Jerusalem acted? Does the thought ever come that we all stand in about the same relation and attitude toward the God-child as the Pharisees stood? They were not bad, immoral people, those Pharisees; they were not rash, nor coarse, nor irreverent, at least they did not mean to be. Rather, they were devout, regular in their religious duties, and gave alms with no more publicity than many respectable Church people do now. They were the conservative Church people of their time, religiously, violently, on principle, opposed to change of any kind, whether in manner or in morals, whether in rites or in ritual. They had but one fault, these Pharisees, that one fault led them into every other trouble and sin of their race and age, that fault was holding arrogantly that God must come as they believed He ought to come, and that God would act and must act as *they* felt He would act. We venture the assertion that the times have not changed much in nineteen hundred years, and that men still make their

own judgment, whether that judgment comes from taste or inheritance it matters not, men still make their own judgment the criterion of right and wrong. Yea, they make their own idea the criterion not only for man, but for God, for they say that unless things are in this way, or in that way, in my way or in my father's way, I will not believe them. That is exactly what the Jews said and did. The birth, the life and the teaching of the Man of Nazareth was opposed to every preconceived idea of what the Hebrew people felt ought to be. His Gospel went crashing through the customs and ritual of many generations. The Chief Priests and the Romans crucified the Child of Bethlehem because He was an innovator and disturbed, by warnings and other novelties, the death-like peace of their conservatism and their so-called orthodoxy.

You and I, perchance, have our ideas of the way and time Christ will come. All men have some idea of where God is to be found, most men have very decided ideas on this subject. If you were to go out into the world and ask earnestly and honestly the question "where can I find God, for I need

Him, and He has asked me to come to Him," many men would answer "God is everywhere," and so He is. The color in the flower, the white crest of the ocean's wave, the mountains that climb above the clouds, the stars that move toward eternity, the breath that comes and goes, and the heart that beats through day and night till life is done, tell me that God is everywhere, but, in all reverence, that is not the God you want. The God that is everywhere lets one man starve, another man surfeit, the bad man prosper, the good man suffer; the God that is everywhere allows the pestilence to devastate and the earthquake to swallow up, and the world, the flesh and the devil to triumph. Under the shelter of the teaching that the only God is the God found in the "everywhere," John Stuart Mill sent forth on its mission of evil one of the most terrible arraignments of religion the world has ever read. The God that is everywhere is a grand idea, but is not a personal certainty in danger, nor a haven from the storm when comes the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds.

You ask, therefore, again, "where is God,



that I may find Him?" and many make this answer, "You will find Him in the heart of true believers." Yes you will find Him there but it must not be forgotten that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked and that the God there makes each life a little Court of Justice, "himself the Judge, himself the jury, himself the prisoner at the bar." Therefore, you say again, "Where is God, that I may find Him?" Give me something definite, something personal, or give me nothing. Do not lure on my tired body with that which is but the mirage of the desert; do not lead my weary heart on to grasp at some Euridyce which, fading into thin air leaves but a ghost upon the eternal sky and pales my sick soul with mortal fear. Give me, I pray you, a real God, a present God, for I am weak and the strife is fierce and the warfare long. Tell me where is God, for the crisis closes and Death draws near—comes to conquer, unless I find the God who can overcome death. Once He lived upon the earth and men came and worshipped Him, brought Him their offerings and returned again, refreshed and strengthened for the strife. When the sick came to that God He



healed them; when the deaf came He unstopped their ears; when the blind came He gave them sight; when the hungry came He fed them; when the sinful came He declared their forgiveness; when the dead lay silent at His feet He broke their bonds of adamant and raised them into life again. But all these came to an earthly, visible body, and this is the God the tired children of this world seek by day and night. Is He still upon the earth, and, if so, where can He be found?

Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. He is still upon the earth and you will find Him where the shepherds found Him, where the wise men found Him, where the devils found Him, where came the sinful and the sick, the dying and the dead, where you may find Him, IN HIS BODY.

This is the meaning of the Incarnation—that God, the Invisible, became visible; that God, the unapproachable, became God the approachable; that God, the Infinite, became God the Finite. God in human form and shape, substance and subsistence, that is the glad tiding of Christianity. It is something very hard to believe. It is something so full of mystery, something so contradictory to all

that is agreeable to human reason, that except we "become as little children" we will never believe it, for that Body where, in the ages gone, dwelt the Son of God, the Saviour of the world was a visible form like our own body. It was a God whose vital existence depended upon the breathing of a woman. It was a Body that felt the cold and grew tired with the heat. It was a Body that men could bruise with stones and which could be torn with a crown of thorns. It was a Body which was tempted by the devil and which was strengthened by the angels. It was a Body which was lacerated by nails and which was gashed with a soldier's spear. But it was a Body the touch of which gave sight to the blind, the voice of which declared the forgiveness of sin. To touch but the fringe of the garment which covered that Body brought healing to the sick, and to shake but a finger in scorn at that Body was an irreverence and blasphemy to the presence of God. For that Body which a woman bore in her arms, which bowed Its head and was baptized in the waters of Jordan, which bent Its knee in the worship of the Temple, which

bore Its own cross to Calvary, that Body at which men wagged their heads in derision and crucified with malefactors, was the Body of God, God before whose presence the host of Heaven bow their faces, and from whom the angels of Heaven flee away. God who alone guides the stars and holds in the hollow of His hand the universe. God who alone contests the world, the flesh and the devil; who alone can forgive sin, and who alone will raise the dead.

And, if you are sick or blind or tired and dying and seek this God, you will find Him in His Body. He said He would be with those that sought Him until the end of the world. But men answer, men who call themselves religious men, He did not mean what He said. I am not writing irreverently. Men must have intimated their want of belief with the statements of God, or the prophet would never have said "God is not a man that He should lie." Men must have contradicted the word of Heaven or the Apostle never would have written of God "We make Him a liar."

God said plainly, when upon the earth, that He would be with us till the end of time, but

men say this is a dream. You can find Him out among the stars, in theory, in philosophy, in His invisible Kingdom, but not upon the earth. You may see Him in Heaven. You can find Him in Hell, but not in this world. Your journey of life must be made alone. You must find your own way, fight your own battles, win your own bread, and be conquered or defeated in your own strength. When you get to Paradise you may see God, then you may be blessed by Him, but not here.

When upon earth God said plainly, "This is my Body, this is my Blood. Whoso eateth my Flesh and drinketh my Blood hath eternal life, and I will raise Him upon the last day." But men, men who say they are religious, say this, too, is a dream. He did not mean what He said, He meant something else. He really meant nothing at all but to give expression to some generalities and undeniable spiritual platitudes.

God said, through His inspired word, the Church, which He purchased with His own Blood, "The Church, which is His Body," but men, men who call themselves religious, say this also is but a dream.

The Church is not His body, but a club,

a coterie, a place for the meeting of people who have congenial tastes and views, but nothing more. The only real Church is the invisible Church, the only real God is the God out among the stars. Such are the words heard on every side, such are the words which make sick the heart and fill the mind with doubt and horror. Such is the teaching which cries through the long Winter night, put out every light and smother the fire on every hearth; for the fallen and the outcast there is the cold, the darkness and the grave, but never in this world either light nor comfort or forgiveness. Such is the teaching which blinds the beacon on every shore and lets the noble ship find, if it may, through cloud and shoal and tempest, the haven where it would be, but such, thank God, is not the teaching of the Catholic Faith. It is the Faith of the Catholic Church, the very Heart of its Faith, that as God once dwelt in a child, in a Body that the storm beat, the mob stoned, and the populace insulted, so God still dwells in that which is human, material and visible. God still is found in that Church which is His Body, that Church which men scorn, the world derides and the devil fights, the Church

insulted, "sore opprest, by schisms rent asunder, by heresies distrest," there, there God may still be found, there we may kneel at His feet, worship Him in spirit and in truth, be healed by His touch, be guided by His hand, be fed by His bounty, be saved by His love.

THE JUDGE OF THE QUICK AND  
THE DEAD

I can but trust that good shall fall  
At last—far off—at last, to all  
And every Winter change to Spring.  
In Memoriam.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE JUDGE OF THE QUICK AND THE DEAD

LET it be said at once that there are many of us who look to be judged and await the judgment with a feeling of the justice of it. The thought that we who have lingered behind in the fight should be placed at death with those who life long have stood on the firing line is altogether distressing. The eternal fitness of things calls for something different. To be rewarded unjustly would be hell.

Here is the comfort of having Christ the LORD for Judge. We will get what is just but in a merciful way, a way which will bring us back to the better self which is in every man. Most of us have done things of far-reaching harm, things of evil influence which spread with ever widening power. Most of us have left undone things which if they had been done might have changed the world.

Even if God were to say "Pass on, let it be forgotten." Can we forget it? Life was given to us as a sacred trust. Too often we have been recreant to that trust. Somewhere, somehow, we must make good the lost and wasted hours of life or we shall not be happy. There is the comfort of our LORD being the Judge. In that Better World He will give us to do that which shall redeem the lost of life and purge away its dross.

We will get in some measure what we deserve but not more than we deserve. There is no thought a man can have, no word he can say, no deed he can do which deserves "eternal punishment." Eternity is a frightfully long time. Imagine a good and merciful God sending one of his wandering children, say for seventy years of wrong doing, out into seventy thousand years of suffering and banishment and that would be but a small part of the "eternal." The thought of it is impossible. Would any of us for any crime whatever send a fellow mortal into seven thousand years of suffering? Are we more merciful than God?

"Eternal punishment" grew out of an age where military power reigned supreme,

where might was right. The instincts of that time were hard, exclusive, warlike and cruel. They were self satisfied, self centred, haughty and pitiless. "They had schooled themselves by centuries of wars, gladiatorial contests and other degrading and brutal public spectacles to set a small value on human life. Human agony was a leading characteristic of their pastimes."

In A.D. 324 Christianity was made the State Religion and thousands upon thousands from motives of policy and expediency embraced the new Religion bringing with them their old murderous instincts. The devouter Christian community remembering the horrible cruelties heaped upon their fathers and forefathers by ten relentless persecutions were easily led to join with others in believing that "eternal punishment" was a fair settlement.

Eternal punishment is also the personal inference of certain learned men who first of all must have felt sure of their own position in the Infinite, then, on their own interpretation of the words of Inspiration, they let the rest of mankind take its chance, but the only Creeds received by all Catholic Christendom

(the Apostles and Nicene) are absolutely silent about punishment of any kind, leaving it to the all merciful Judge, AND THE CREEDS ARE THE CHURCH'S AUTHORITATIVE INTERPRETATION OF THE WORDS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

Out of keeping with a belief in "Eternal Punishment" was the universal custom of all the early Church to pray for the departed, and we still beseech God "for all sorts and conditions of men" that He would make "His ways known unto them" and that He would "have mercy upon all men." Will such prayers offered by the Church daily go unanswered? Above all will the prayer from the cross "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" be without avail?

It is probable that many more die penitent than we imagine. "Who knows," says an old Father of the Church of the man supposed to be impenitent, "but that when the Priest has said the last prayers and the near and loved ones say 'He is gone,' but that our LORD will say to the soul facing eternity 'My Son' and the soul will answer 'My LORD and my God.'"

It is also probable that the man who sins deeply and desperately does so in the belief

that there is no God or that if there is a God He has no care for so small a speck in the vast universe as a man. Now it is certain that when at death the vista of the eternal clears for such a man and He knows that there is a God, a good and merciful God, that he will take the hard road of penitence to find Him. So the free-will of man will not be broken down though at last,

Not one life shall be destroyed  
Or cast as rubbish in the void  
When God hath made the pile complete.

What the judgment of Christ our LORD is to be may be known from what were his judgments on earth. That judgment will doubtless still be far different from what many expect. Said one Catholic to another concerning a mutual friend who was a Protestant: "He is so fine a man, too bad we shall not see him in Heaven." "Too bad indeed," said his fellow Catholic, "he will be so near the Throne of God and we so far away." For the same reason we are not likely to see Marcus Aurelius there and other of the "heathen" like him.

"Saint John uses a very broad expres-

sion," said the Rev. Dr. Guthrie. "'Jesus Christ,' he says, 'is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also *for the sins of the whole world.*' 'The whole world.' 'Ah,' some would say, 'that is dangerous language.' It is God's language. Saint John is speaking as he was moved by the Holy Ghost. It throws a zone of mercy around the world. Perish the hand that would narrow it by a hairsbreadth."

We know that no soul that ever turned to our LORD in penitence was ever turned away; but He saved no soul from the bitter pain of real penitence. He did not check one drop from the eyes of her who washed his feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. He did not save the man who denied Him with curses from the look that broke his heart nor from the three fold question and reproach which for him ever recalled his three denials.

Oh, Peter, Saint and Sinner, ever pray for us your fellow recreant men that on life's troubled sea we may without sinking walk to the loved and merciful Christ.

"Lord, when I found Thee not, Thou foundest me!  
I sought Thee in the grave—Thee, strong and free,  
And living unto God eternally.

I seek Thee still, Whom none shall seek in vain;  
Though mists of ignorance, and sin, and pain,  
May hide Thee for a little while again.

When the great Easter dawns, then find Thou me  
Once more—for evermore—beside that Sea  
Whose tide is Love; Whose shore, eternity.”

G. W.





## THE COMFORTER

To Thee, O Comforter divine  
For all Thy grace and power benign  
Sing we Alleluia.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE COMFORTER

“I WILL pray to the Father and He shall give you another Comforter that He may abide with you forever.” So speaks our Blessed LORD when He is about to take His Bodily Presence from the world.

We do well then to recall His words for a large part of Christendom seems to have forgotten this promise, seems indeed much in the way of the disciples at Ephesus who said, “We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.” Therefore the Church in Creed and prayers brings to the Holy Ghost equal worship with God the Father and God the Son.

The office of the Holy Ghost may be spoken of generally as “that of completing the work of God the Father and God the Son, perfecting that which each has originated and created.” The action of the Holy Spirit in the Church is the extension, the perpetuation

of the Incarnation in its power of making man a partaker of the Divine Nature. This, as Human words would state it, is the theology of God the Holy Ghost.

The mighty work of the Holy Ghost is to convince us of sin. The man who has some serious disease closing in upon him must first know he is ill before he takes the care and means to find health again.

To "know thyself" the old philosopher felt was a matter of first importance. They asked one of the old saints what was the most important virtue and he said humility," "and the second most important," and he said "humility," "and the third," and he said "humility."

The Holy Ghost has come to bring to our minds just where we are—not what the world thinks of us—nor what we may think even of ourselves, but what God knows we are. The vital requisite of Christianity is the knowledge and the penitent avowal that we are sinners, all, everyone, child and father, fair and homely, pauper and affluent, layman and priest, each, all, and every one of every place and of every age, "miserable sinners."

If this be not a fact, Holy Scripture and

the Church have no meaning. "All we, like sheep, have gone astray; all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" is the voice from Genesis to Revelation. It was the confession of the Church in the days gone, it must be the sorrow of the earthly Church till time shall be no more.

To believe that truth fully entirely, honestly and humbly is absolute necessity if one would ever have that new and contrite heart which obtains of the God of all mercy perfect remission and forgiveness.

The mission of the Holy Ghost is to lead us to that knowledge of ourselves and of God that will start us to make to-day better than was yesterday and to find in life to-morrow something nobler than we found to-day.

The spiritual world of the wise man increases every day and that increase becomes to him what the Holy Ghost is to the Church—a comforter. We speak of the regeneration of the world and yet doubt the regeneration of the men who make the world.

The Holy Ghost has all the perfections of the Deity, eternal, omnipresent, omniscient. He formed the Body of the Christ in the Virgin's Womb—"Conceived by the Holy

Ghost''—He is the author of every good work in us. He inspired the prophets and apostles that they might communicate to us the mind and will of God. He with the Father and the Son is the glorious Being to whom we are consecrated in Baptism. Briefly, He is the LORD and Giver of Life.

To the soul willing to receive Him He gives His manifold gifts of grace; the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the spirit of knowledge and true godliness with the spirit of holy fear. Finally it is He who vouchsafes to bless and sanctify the Sacrifice of the Altar.

“Such is my belief in the reality, and existence, and agency of the Divine Spirit, that I think I should have no hope and no faith as a minister and as a labourer for the enfranchisement of mankind, if it were not that I believed there was an all-prevalent, vitalising Divine Spirit. I should as soon attempt to raise flowers if there were no atmosphere, or produce fruits if there were neither light nor heat, as I should attempt to regenerate men if I did not believe there was

a Holy Ghost. I have faith in the Divine Spirit spread abroad over the whole human family, which is really the cause of life in the higher directions; and it is this faith that gives me hope and courage in all labour.

“Hence, God’s Union with men is not a shadow, is not a figure, is not a dream: it is the statement of a fact as literal as any law in nature. The union of sunlight with flowers is not more real. The flow of nourishing sap in fruits is not more literal than the interfusion and soul-union of God’s soul with men.

“What a wonderful and glorious doctrine is this, that the soul of God touches the soul of man! As there is no babe cradled and rocked that has not its mother, in the ordinary course of life, to overhang it by night and by day, to kiss it as it sleeps, and to cover it with smiles and caresses when it wakes; so every creature that is born into life has a God whose ever watchful soul broods tenderly over it by day and by night, and who interspheres it in His own life.”





WHO SPAKE BY THE PROPHETS

Many will say, "I can find God without the help of the Bible, or Church or Minister." Very well. Do so if you can. The Ferry Company would feel no jealousy of a man who would prefer to swim to New York. Let him do so if he is able, and we will talk about it on the other shore.

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

## CHAPTER X

### “WHO SPAKE BY THE PROPHETS”

No better summary of what the Holy Scriptures are has ever been given than that the Bible is the story of our LORD on earth and in eternity written by many different men in different ways, and in different ages. His life is the scarlet thread binding all its pages into one volume. It was our LORD Himself who said of the Books of the Old Testament “They are they which testify of Me.” Beginning with the general prophecies which declare the coming of a Messiah we come to others telling of His Dignity and Excellence and the object of His Mission. Then His Deity, the Nation and Family He was to descend from, the time He was to appear, the place of His birth; that a Messenger should go before Him, that He was to be born of a Virgin, that He was to be worshipped by the wise men, that there was to be a massacre at Bethlehem and He should be

carried into Egypt, that the Holy Ghost should come down upon Him, that He should be a Prophet and preach the word of the LORD and after a Priest offering a Sacrifice and at last He was to be a King. That He should cast the buyers and sellers out of the Temple and be hated and persecuted, that He should work miracles and ride in triumph into Jerusalem, that they should conspire to destroy Him and that He should be sold and betrayed for thirty pieces of silver, that He should be accused by false witnesses, that He should not plead upon His trial, that He should be insulted and spit upon, that He should be scourged and crucified and that His disciples should forsake Him, that they would offer Him gall and vinegar to drink, that they should cast lots upon His vesture, that He should be mocked by His enemies, His side pierced, also His hands and feet, that he should be patient under suffering and pray for His foes, that a bone of Him should not be broken and He should die with malefactors, that He should be cut off in the midst of His days and that there should be darkness and an earthquake at His death, that He should be buried with the rich and that He

should rise again from the dead, that He should ascend into Heaven and sit on the right hand of God.

The miracle, for it is nothing else, of these prophecies and many others like them, is that they extend over hundreds of years, coming from different lands, written by different men many of whom never saw nor heard of each other and here gathered into one book. Some of these prophecies stand out clearly like the story of the man who takes his only son up the Mount of Calvary or Moriah that he may offer him a burnt offering to God, his son being saved by command of God and a thousand years thereafter, Christ the antetype, the only Son, makes the great offering on Mount Calvary. In other prophecies the meanings at first sight is not so clear but deep and wonderful when sought out. It is all like a picture an artist once painted. As you saw it in the distance it seemed a landscape of hills and fields and running brooks. with flowers. Close at hand it was the face of our LORD crowned with the Crown of Thorns. This is the Face back of the Old Testament sometimes showing clearly, sometimes half lost in the outlines of other

prophecies. That the New Testament deals with our LORD and Him alone no one can of course deny. What was the guiding hand back of these Holy Writings? "Who spake by the Prophets," we say in the creed of the Holy Ghost, and our LORD Himself said of the Holy Ghost, "Whom the Father will send in my name He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." "He will guide you into all truth, He will show you things to come." This is the power from on High which guided the writing of the New Testament and which spake by the Prophets of the Old.

Now when the meaning of these sacred Records is not clear who is to decide what the meaning is? If man is to decide for himself then one man's opinion is as good as another. In the last two or three centuries we have seen a good deal of what happens when a man takes his Bible and goes off and founds a "Church" for himself. All goes well and happily until some man in the congregation having the same right as every man has "of thinking for himself" think things should be different, and thereupon takes his Bible

and starts another “Church.” It is slowly dawning upon the religious world that this course means the ruin of a large part of Christianity. “A home divided against itself cannot stand,” said our LORD. This brings us face to face with the question “Where did we get the Bible,” who first said with authority what was the Bible? It is a historical fact that shortly after Apostolic times many pious books were written, some of them deeply religious. From these hundreds of books a selection had to be made as to which were “inspired” and which were not. Who made this final selection? Unquestionably the Church in Council, but the Church is slow and most careful in making up this list. The middle of the fourth century has to come and go before even a partial list is forthcoming. It seems to have been forgotten by a large part of Christendom that the Church that conquered and changed the world labored for more than three centuries without a Bible as we now have it—that it Baptized and Confirmed, gave Absolution and Communion with only some one letter or gospel to give cheer or comfort in its struggle with the world. It follows necessarily that the

Church which decided which of many books were inspired and were to form the Canon must be the one to interpret what these Books mean. There are many "views" and "doctrines" upon which the Church has not spoken and therefore concerning which man is at liberty to think as he likes but where the Church has spoken as in the Nicene Creed we have the true and final interpretation of the Bible. With the historic Church back of these Sacred Books, the Church which has kept them through all the attacks and onslaughts of the centuries we may come more and more to know the truth of the words that "we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."

What, let us ask, is the true purpose of Holy Scripture; why was it written? St. Paul replies: "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning." And what kind of learning? we ask. St. Paul answers again: "That we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have," not simply information, but "hope." Scripture, then, is a Book of moral or spiritual learning; it is addressed to the heart



and will, rather than to the intellect. It is a Book for the understanding, no doubt; but it is much more a Book for the spirit, for the heart.

There are many other kinds of learning to be got out of the Bible. It is a great manual of Eastern antiquities; it gives us information about the ancient world which we can obtain nowhere else. It carries us back to the early dawn of history, when as yet all that we commonly mean by civilization did not exist. Again, it is a handbook of political experience; it shows us what a nation can do, and may have to suffer, how it may be affected by the conduct of its rulers; how it may make its rulers to be like itself. So, again, it is a rich collection of the wisdom which should govern personal conduct; a man need not believe in Revelation in order to admire the shrewdness and penetration of the Book of Proverbs. Again it is a mine of poetry; it contains the very highest poetry which the human race possesses; poetry before which the great masters of song, Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, must bow; poetry by which the two last have been, in fact, themselves largely inspired. Once

more, it is a choice field for the study of language; in its pages we follow one language, the Hebrew, from its cradle to its grave; and it gives lessons in the art of making language describe the emotions and moods of the soul which are not to be found elsewhere.

A man may have much of it, yet he may miss altogether a true lesson which Scripture has to teach. A man may be a good antiquarian, historian, economist, linguist, moralist; he may take the keenest interest in Scripture because it has so much to say on each of all of these subjects; and yet he may be entirely ignorant of the true teaching of Scripture. He may read the Bible, just as some people come to Church, only to admire the architecture or the music, thus missing the very end which these beautiful and useful accessories of worship are intended to promote—the communion of the soul with God.

It is the revelation of the unveiling of God, as a Living and Moral Being, who knows and can supply all that we need; who is what He has always been; Who will ever be what He is. In His great attributes of Righteousness and Mercy, He is the subject of the Old Testa-

ment. In His astonishing intervention, on the scene of human history, in the Person of His Son, He is the subject of the New. All that belongs to human life pales before this, the central and dominant theme of the Bible—God, as revealed, first partially, then most vividly and unreservedly, to the soul of man.

—Canon Liddon, “Advent in St. Paul’s.



# THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

I love the Church, the Holy Church,  
That o'er Our life presides  
The Birth, the Bridal and the Grave,  
And many an hour besides.

Be Mine, through life to live in her  
And when the Lord shall call  
To die in her, the Spouse of Christ  
The Mother of us all.

BISHOP COXE.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

“UPON this rock I will build my Church and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.” These are the words of the LORD Christ to a world where, in fewest years, everything seems to change—to a world where all things seem at last to fail.

Set in the midst of this falling and dying world, growing amidst the crumbling and annihilating forces of nature, steady in the throes of nations, calm amidst the rise and fall of kingdoms, there has lived on the Church of God.

Will it live on to the end of time? Will it make sure of the world which is yet to come?

In that which the Church has already endured we will find much of the answer.

Against that Church as you know, went forth in its first days, persecution. So deadly and effective was the stroke of Roman persecution that, as a rule, it merely had to

suggest the discontinuance of what seemed to it a new Religion. This suggestion being slighted by the early Christians, local persecutions were ordered, but still the followers of the Nazarene grew and spread their teachings—then the mightiest military power the world ever knew said: “Blot them out.” So, on a quiet summer’s day, they were driven in bands like sheep—women with babes in their arms, white-haired men, and little children, all to death in some terrible form. Between games and revelry strong men were pulled apart by horses. That night the few Christians who survived that ghastly day were placed on the columns of Nero’s garden, wrapped in inflammable material, and burned to death. The light of those living torches has never gone out. It illumined all after ages; it throws its ray of light on the glory and majesty of any life faithful unto death.

Relentless and merciless as was that first onslaught of Rome and the nine other persecutions which followed it, they brought no such danger to the Church as did that which followed—Prosperity. The world casting in its lot with the Church and asking to have the standards lowered. How many bitter mem-



ories and experiences of some Laodicea did Christianity have to live through before the Church put into one of her great prayers not simply "in all time of our tribulation," but, also, "In all time of our prosperity, good Lord deliver us." But the Church lived through prosperity even as it did through persecution. Then the powers of evil struck at the heart of things. The attack from without turned to betrayal from within—subtle, disguised error crept into the simple Faith once delivered to the Saints. The water of life seemed clear as crystal, but the wells from which it came were poisoned. The cloud on the clear sky did not seem at first as large as a man's hand—it grew to darken the Heavens and flood the earthly Church with unbelief.

The world looked on in scorn and said: "What folly it is for men to quarrel to the death over a single letter of a word"; and men within the Church said: "What shame to rend the Church." On the side of Arius were some of the most brilliant minds the world ever knew—he himself was a man of rare charm and consummate intellect, one by one he gained to his side followers from every

station in life—some of the greatest statesmen, many of the most learned bishops, and last, through the influence of Constantine's sister, the Emperor himself. Alone, almost, against this powerful majority of Church and state, stood, as far as numbers go, a mere handful of men. But the handful, God being with it, triumphed, or Christianity would have vanished from the earth—for Arianism, as you know, denied the Deity of Jesus Christ our Lord. Upon the Deity of Jesus Christ stands or falls the belief of Christendom that earth and sea shall at last give up their dead.

Following Arius came Attila, so rightly called the scourge of God. The scourge of Egypt is described by the words: "There was not a house where there was not one dead"; the scourge of Attila is best described by the words: "There was not a house where was left one living." In his wake followed death and destruction, complete and overwhelming; what he did not slay he burned to ashes. Not altogether idle were his words that even the grass did not grow again where his horse trod. In the descent upon humanity of that countless horde of Hun and Goth and

Visigoth, led by such men as Attila, Europe faced a cataclysm which promised not to leave living even the wild flowers in the field—one power saved Europe, and one power alone—the power of the Cross. The Religion of Jesus Christ softened the fierce fury of Barbarism; converted many of its great leaders, and taught it giant strength and magnificent courage that the glory of life was to save and not to destroy. While that was not its object, the Church in saving Europe, saved itself—saved itself to meet, as the centuries passed on, the most formidable foe of all, and that is simply—time, time. Time that is “eternity disguised.” What living thing has survived the ravages of time? Before its steady tread have all things and all men gone down. Proud Attila and fierce Alaric—the lilies of France, the eagle of Rome, the serpent of Egypt, all alike are in the dust because of time. If it had been content with bringing to nothingness the great and powerful, but there was nothing so small, nothing so weak nor so helpless that time failed to destroy. The little loved child that was the one joy of the poor man’s hovel, the little lamb that was the child’s playmate, and the

tiny bird that sang to them both—each and all alike were turned to dust by time. Very naturally Time said to the Catholic Church: “You must of course change, everything else has changed for me—all governments, all thrones, all customs, all beliefs. The world and I demand there shall be change.” But the Service offered in the Church to-day is the one offered in the Catacombs, and in almost the same words. The strength of Christianity is that it is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, that it contends earnestly for a Faith once for all delivered to the Saints, that its story is the “old, old story,” the story the King asked, told him when he came to die, the story the peasant woman told her child when the night was coming on, the story the beautiful woman of the world but yesterday asked read to her when she found this world was passing away.

It must ever be remembered also that back of these evidences of time and experience, back of the power of the Church to live through the inconsistent character of many of its followers, back of its power to live through the disaster of its own tragic divisions, back of all these, rising above them all

there stands above all else the moral character of its Divine Founder—as witnessed by friend and foe. How vast the army of men who have said with Pilate: “I find no fault in Him.” Countless the number who have said with the officer: “Never man spake like this man,” and it was Renan representing the reverent unbelief of all ages who said: “There never was before, there never will be again, a character like Jesus of Nazareth.” And it is the man in the street, the man who has no use for organized Christianity, as well as the man of the study, who says: “What the world needs, what I need, is the life and spirit of Jesus Christ.”

The Church will live on and survive the deadening power of time because the heart of its theology, the sum of what it has to do, the all in all of what it has to say is in the Life and Example, in the atoning Sacrifice and Resurrection from the Dead of Jesus Christ the LORD.



## PRAYER

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,  
The Christian's native air;  
His watchword at the gates of death  
He enters Heaven with prayer.

JAMES MONTGOMERY.



## CHAPTER XII

### PRAYER

It was in Notre Dame where there was not even "standing room," where the savant knelt with the proletariat that Lacordaire said "Insects of an hour, that live and die under a blade of grass, you can pray." That is man's strange privilege that as he is hurled through unknown space at over a million miles a day he can pray and he can be heard. Modern learning has revealed to us many wonderful things but none more august than the oneness of the universe itself, that the falling of a grain of sand is felt on the farthest star. It follows that the Creator of it all must feel and hear the heart cry of a child anywhere—the child made in His own image.

In the midst of such a comforting belief there sometimes breaks upon man the awful immensity of the universe and the utter littleness of man and he says:

What is it all but the murmur of gnats  
In the gleam of a million million suns?

or in the words of the Psalmist, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him?"

The microscope however has revealed a universe quite as wonderful as the telescope. What is it we ourselves care for most, said a thoughtful man, the mountains and the seas or diamonds and little children? All values are as nothing when the human soul is in the balance. What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and lose his own soul is a question quite as important to God as it is to man, for it was to save the soul of man that Christ the Son of God lived and died and rose again. We need have no fear then of God being unmindful of us. We are in His mind above all other created beings just as surely as the ill child is in the mother's mind more than all her well ones. So it comes that men have always prayed everywhere and at all times. The greatest of Greek poems the *Iliad* begins with prayer. The last good book has this in its preface, "O God, what is true in this book let it be remembered, what is evil let it be forgotten."

How much we lose who do not pray—what if Jean Paul Richter's dream were true—that our LORD Christ stood on the Altar stairs of

the vast Cathedral and all people were gathered there—the graves gave up their dead and they too were there and then our LORD said to them all—to the little children to the old and young together—“My children, I have been to the farthest star and all the way that lies between and there is no God anywhere—we have no Father that cares, and this is the end of all.” The cry that met these words was so deep and terrible that Richter wakened and thanked God it was but a dream. Such an intense illustration makes clearer to us the privilege and comfort of prayer.

Sir Wilfred Grenfell by life and word bears testimony to what it means when he says, “The privilege of prayer to me is one of the most cherished possessions, because faith and experience alike convince me that God himself sees and answers, and His answers I never venture to criticise. It is only my part to ask. It is entirely His to give or withhold as He knows best. If it were otherwise I would not dare to pray at all. In the quiet of home, in the heat of life and strife, in the face of death the privilege of speech with God is inestimable. I value it more because it calls for nothing that the wayfaring man,

though a fool, cannot give—that is, the simplest expression to his simplest desire. When I can neither see, nor hear, nor speak, still I can pray so that God can hear. When I finally pass through the valley of the shadow of death I expect to pass through it in conversation with Him.”

These words of one who has lived for man and so near to God tell of the profound comfort that in the valley of the shadow of death and beyond it, in the world of prayer there are no dead. We pray for them and they for us we may be sure. The mother that prayed for her boy all her life long is it likely that she will forget him now that death has brought her nearer to the Giver and Keeper of all? May not each man say with Arthur:

Pray for my soul, More things are wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams of, Wherefore let thy voice  
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.  
For what are men better than sheep and goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If, knowing God they lift not hands of prayer  
Both for themselves and those who call them friends?  
For so the whole round earth is every way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

Just run over in your thought His prayers: the prayer that He taught us to pray, "Our Father, who art in heaven;" the prayer He offered Himself when the disciples of John the Baptist came to Him: "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and the understanding, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for it seemeth good in thy sight;" the prayer that He offered in the temple, when Philip and Andrew came to Him with the message about the Greeks who were seeking to see Him: "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour:" the prayer that He offered before the grave of Lazarus, "Father, I thank thee that thou hearest me, and I know that thou hearest me always;" the prayer that He put up in Gethsemane, "My Father, if this cup cannot pass from me except I drink it, thy will be done;" and the last prayer of all, when, as a tired little child, He lay down in His Father's arms and fell asleep: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." He never pushed God off into His almightiness; not

once in all His life of supplication can you find Him dealing with God in this way. He never smote the heart with the chill of the divine attributes.

What a reality this conception of prayer gives to it. We are not praying to any cold theistic God alone; we are praying to our Father made real to us, warm with the warmth of a great tenderness for us, living with a great consciousness of all our human suffering and struggle and conflict and need.

It makes prayer, for one thing, a rational thing. I can go to my Father and ask Him for the things that I need. There is an exquisite passage in Andrew Bonar's journals in which he speaks of sitting one day in his study and looking out of his window and seeing two of his children pass through the fields. He said as he saw those children making their way across the fields, the love in his heart overcame him, and he pushed his books away from him on the table, and went to the door and called out across the field to them, and they came running eagerly in response to their father's loving call. And when they had come and he had kissed them, he said he gave each one of them something,

simply because the ecstasy of his fatherly love made it impossible that he should not do something then for those two children who were so dear to his heart. Do you suppose God is an inferior sort of a father? Do you suppose that there are impulses in us toward our children, or in our fathers toward us, that are not simply just the dim and the faded suggestion of nobler and diviner impulses of the father heart of God? Prayer in the sense of supplication for real things becomes a rational reality of men who believe in God in Jesus Christ.

And how sweet it makes prayer in the sense of living fellowship. Do you suppose that we are nobler characters than that great Father after whom these human fatherhoods of ours are named? Do you suppose that if it is sweet to us to have our children come creeping to us in the dark, it is not sweet to our heavenly Father here and everywhere, to have men, His sons, come stealing to His side and His love? This is no excessive way of putting it. Is it not guaranteed to us by those words which our Lord spoke that Easter morning as He stood there by His open grave, and the woman who adored Him was about



to clasp His feet, "Mary go, and tell my disciples that I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, my God and your God." Yes, that is the right way to put it today. No God for us, nowhere through the whole universe a real and satisfying God for us, except the God Who is discovered to us in Jesus Christ, and Who is calling to us today by the lips of Christ, "My son, O my son," and Who would have us call back to Him, if we be true men, "My Father, O my Father."—From an address of Mr. Robert E. Speer.



# THE EUCHARIST

The Holy Thing is here again  
Among us, brother, fast thou too and pray  
And tell Thy brother Knights to fast and pray  
That so perchance the Vision may be seen  
By thee and those, and all the world be healed.  
The Holy Grail.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE EUCHARIST

“THE Holy Communion Commonly Called the Mass.”

In this way the Prayer Book of 1549 speaks of the Service called for nineteen hundred years by so many different names but all alike meaning the Service where are present the Holy Living, the Holy Dead, the Holy Angels and the Holy God.

This is the Service which according to the Book of Acts was offered to God “daily.” This is the Service which Pliny in his report to Trajan says the Christians “on a stated day were accustomed to meet before daylight and to say in turn a hymn to Christ as God and to bind themselves by a ‘Sacramentum’ not to commit any wickedness and to follow only justice and righteousness.”

Since that time there has not been a day unless Good Friday but that somewhere in the world there has been pleaded to God the

Father the Sacrifice of the Cross. There is no more unanswerable proof of the truth of Christianity than this daily Service age after age and now offered in thousands upon thousands of Churches day after day from century to century. So is fulfilled the prophecy "In every place incense shall be offered unto my Name and a Pure Offering."

The special comfort of this Service is that it is an offering anyone may make to God if penitent—saint or sinner—and yet know it will be accepted of God—for it is the pleading of the love of Jesus Christ upon the Cross for all mankind.

Wherewith shall a man appear before God is a question old as the human race. What need has God of any thing? God who has the rivers and the mountains the wild flowers and the stars? "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" For man failing so often to do justly, to love

mercy and to walk humbly this question of the old prophet from out the gray dawn of history remained unanswered until the Son of God stretched out His arms upon the Cross—until the Church came at whose Altars is pleaded day unto day the supreme Offering of the Cross.

Under the pleading of the Sacrifice of the Cross the man with the world's darkest record in time may hope for shelter and forgiveness if penitent. "What can such common things as bread and wine do in the face of the misery and tragedy of history?" What indeed? Nothing if alone but with God and through God what can they not do? "Is not religion a spiritual thing? What can material things have to do with it?"

Well a Mother's love is generally held as one of the most sacred things of life but what would a mother's love mean without the material mother and her encircling arms?

The work the Red Cross has done appeals to the most hardened man but what would it all mean without that waiting to minister back of the field of battle, the bathing of the wounded, the comforting of the sick and dying and other unnumbered material things?

The Incarnation—God taking unto Himself the nature of man body and soul has made sacred all material things.

In our LORD'S Ministry He makes constant use of material things—when He raised the Ruler's daughter, He took her by the hand—He touched the eyes of the blind and laid His hand on the leper though the law forbade anyone to touch a leper. He touched the tongue and ears of the man deaf and dumb, He touched the wounded ear of Malchus when He made it whole and when He blessed little children He laid His hands on them. So many miracles were wrought by nearness to His Body that it was written—"The whole multitude sought to touch Him; for there went virtue out of Him, and He healed them all." Thus he wills to teach us in this way that all healing grace comes to us through contact with His human nature, His perfect Manhood. "He heals by touch because He is the Son of Man, as well as the Son of God; and His Manhood is the link which binds us to His Godhead, the channel through which all grace flows down to us from God." So indeed are Bread and Wine "Common material things" but with God back of them and in

them they may become the food of the soul and through the Church which is His Body still upon the earth become the sacrifice of the Altar which united to and because of the Sacrifice of the Cross avails to take away the sins of the world.

It is in this Service that our LORD fulfills His last promise "I am with you always even unto the end of the world." This above all other things is what man wants—A God still here upon the earth to whom in his joy or in his sorrow he can go and speak the triumph or burden of his heart. The proof of this belief by the first Christians is clear and definite—"The cup of Blessing," says Saint Paul, "which we bless is it not the Communion (the partaking of) the Blood of Christ? The Bread which we break is it not the Communion (the partaking of) the Body of Christ." Our LORD's own words concerning this Sacrament makes His Presence there an absolute certainty—"I am the Living Bread which came down from Heaven, if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live forever; and the Bread that I will give is my Flesh which I will give for the life of the world. Whoso eateth my Flesh and drinketh my blood hath

eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." This was the "hard saying" hard alike to friends as well as to foes and which brought down upon Himself doubt, conflict and desertion—Doubt; many of His disciples said, "This is a hard saying, who can bear it?" Conflict; the Jews therefore strove one with another, saying, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" Desertion: "Many of His Disciples went back and walked no more with Him." But He does not take back or explain away one word of the "hard saying" instead He turns to the few that are left and sadly asks of them "Will ye also go away?" And Saint Peter gives the answer the Church has ever made "LORD to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

This explains why *gladness* marks the lives of the first Christians. "Day by day they continued steadfastly in the Temple and in the Breaking of the Bread—at Home they did take their food with *gladness* and singleness of heart praising God."

Even as the darker days come on—when toil and suffering and relentless persecution marked them for their own the "gladness"



still is with them while Thanksgiving (Eucharistia) mark each day. This belief in the real, objective Presence of God the son in His great Service underlies the “splendid defiance” of the early Church to the most powerful imperial force of ancient times. This is why a Church is built whether vast Cathedral or humble village Church—it is to cover and enshrine an Altar where is pleaded the Sacrifice of the Cross for all the world, living and departed the Lamb of God himself being present.

This explains the constant reference in Holy Scripture to Bread, from the Mysterious Melchizedek “Priest of the most high God without Father, without Mother, without descent who brought forth Bread and Wine blessed Abraham” down through the Manna in the wilderness even to where our LORD was born—Bethlehem, which means the House of Bread—where knelt in adoration the Wise Men, where still will kneel the wise men till time shall be no more to their “great and endless comfort.”

“When He blessed the Bread and Wine, His eye was fixed on His approaching death

upon the Cross on the morrow, and on the whole course of earthly time, and the development of the human race. His Priesthood, which He began with His assumption of human nature, was not to terminate and be laid aside with an act of sacrifice once offered; He meant to exercise it continually in the world beyond before the Father, and here below through human representatives, who under the veil of bread and wine were to offer Himself, His glorified Body, His spiritualised Blood, and with Him those who fed upon Him, as the uninterrupted offering of the Church constantly realising itself, yet ever one and the same. . . .

“While He was in no position to testify to the world on the following day, when the soldiers laid their rude hands upon Him and bound Him—that His death was really an offering a free-will surrender of Himself—that He testified now: ‘What I give you to eat is My Body which is broken for you, what ye drink is My Blood which I shed for you.’ Thus were the altars of His Church for the future to be one with the Cross, the same Body, the same Sacrifice here as there, one great and simple Offering, not repeated, but

extended in time to be coextensive with the duration of His Church; this was the one Oblation truly worthy of the Divine Majesty, and the solemn worship of the new covenant.

“So did He attain in the simplest manner the double object of giving to His Church a continual Sacrifice and a centre-point of common worship, and at the same time of giving to believers a food which would convey to the whole man, body and soul, the benediction and the sanctifying powers of His own humanity, and plant in them the germs of future immortality.” \*

\* “The First Age of Christianity and the Church,” Dr. Dollinger, translated by the Rev. H. N. Oxenham. Ch. i., pp. 36-7.



## THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

The Hand that made me, holds me in Its clasp  
Not scorning the life marred and incomplete  
That trembles yet with hope to be fulfilled  
Lying at Jesus feet.

G. W.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

ONE memory followed the Emperor Constantine and darkened his brightest days. It stood beside him when the sun was high in the heavens—it woke him in the darkness of the night—That memory was the murder of his eldest son Crispus. In his agony of remorse he went back to the old religion he had renounced, but the Flamens of Rome said “For such a crime there is no expiation.” He turned to philosophy but the Platonist answered, “There can be no hope nor pardon for such a wrong.” Then it was that one of the oldest Bishops reminded him that in Christianity there is forgiveness for every sin. “The Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.” It was after this that the kingly penitent made the great submission in the washing of regeneration and became the first Christian Emperor.

This has been always one of the deep com-

forts of Christianity that "with all its strange unearthly teaching about purity and holiness, yet it has ever held out its hand to those whom the world calls lost." In defiance of all human judgments and human laws the possibility of forgiveness for all is found on nearly every page of the New Testament, nowhere else in the universe is there forgiveness.

The heartlessness and relentlessness of nature is self evident. Everywhere it is "red in tooth and claw with ravine." The weak are blotted out, the strong live on. The man who violates the law of health may repent in dust and ashes but he must pay the penalty just the same for nature knows no forgiveness—it never pardons a false step.

So far as we have ever conquered nature it has been by obeying her to the letter.

In the realm of human law there is no forgiveness the judge is the minister of justice not of mercy. If there are "extenuating circumstances" it merely shows that in some cases the law does not apply. Jean Valjean by a long and beautiful life of expiation did what he could to redeem a broken law, but everywhere, in the high seat of authority as



well as in the dark Sewers of the great city there followed him—Javert—the chief of Police.

Above all there is no forgiveness with conscience. The things done or left undone in the deep past how conscience brings them out one by one, forgotten but not forgiven.

There is but one place where man may be sure of mercy—at the foot of the Cross. An outcast from society forces her way into our LORD's presence—she bathes His feet with her tears and wipes them with her hair. Does He know what she is? “Her sins, which are many, are forgiven” is our LORD's summary of what is to be done with her.

A young man had wasted his patrimony in shameful sin, he had broken all laws human and divine, yet the Father goes out to meet him with robe and ring, with kiss and welcome.

All this but reflects the spirit of Him who said as nails were driven through hands and feet, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.”

Naturally the heart of man asks is it true? Is it not too good to be true? Is there any one on earth who in the name of God can

speaking with authority and say my sins are forgiven? This brings us back to one of the most solemn days of history—when Death had given up its dead—It is the first Easter night and with fears from within and with fears from without the disciples are assembled—suddenly in their midst stands the LORD over Death saying “Peace be unto you, Receive you the Holy Ghost; Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them.” At such a time and place there are a thousand things it would seem more probable He would say—but these are the words He did say. Now comes the rightful question of the scribes “Who can forgive sins but God only?” Surely no man, however good, however great.

It comes to the supreme question at last: Did God leave anyone on earth to speak in His name—Is the Church on earth, against which He said the gates of Hell should not prevail, a living reality or a vague and misty myth? There is no question as to what we ourselves do in having some one represent us nor as to what tremendous power we put into the hands of some of our fellow men. The man had committed a grave crime against state and nation—against man and

God but the Governor for reasons best known to himself, pardoned him and the man went free. Surely God can give to man the authority that man himself gives to his fellow man, it being contingent that the man himself is penitent—for a thousand Priests together cannot absolve a man who is not penitent. “The power and commandment to declare and pronounce the Absolution and remission of sin” depends absolutely upon his being penitent. The man being penitent however, and true penitence carrying with it the desire to forsake sin and the resolution of trying to do better, then “by the authority committed unto me” the “I absolve thee” is in the name of God and is the same as He who said—“Neither do I condemn thee—go and sin no more.”

This comforting truth gives a man a new start in life—so much of life is beyond recall. The opportunity once at our door can never come again. The ramparts that might have been carried rise now insuperable. Too much of every life rests now with “The grace of a day that is dead, The sound of a voice that is still.” This is true everywhere except with God “Today if you will hear His voice” you may start again with the record God and the

angels keep, swept clear, with the added strength and blessing which comes with Absolution and with every possibility of making life the satisfying, triumphant thing it was meant to be.

When one goes to confess the doleful tale of his transgressions he wants wise counsel, impartial judgment, and kindly sympathy. A friend might counsel wisely and judge fairly, but perhaps might unprofitably sympathize. The priest should be a trained confessor. By such experience of sin able to counsel wisely, by his Divine studies fitted to judge each according to the law of God and not with man's judgment, and, if he be a true priest, out of the deep sense of his own frailty, not unmindful of the compassionateness of Jesus Christ in dealing with poor human souls. How wisely and graciously then has our Lord dealt with us in making his priests the physicians of the soul!

It seems to me that nothing could be more reasonable and beautiful than this method of dealing with sin-laden souls. If there be any true sense of sin as a burden, a load upon the heart, there must inevitably be the further sense that only Confession can relieve one of

that load. Truthfully if poetically does David describe this state of the sinner, "For whilst I held my tongue, my bones consumed away through my daily complaining." To all such heavy-hearted ones Holy Church cries, Go shew yourselves to the priests. For however any other might sympathize, advise and comfort you, the priest is God's own appointed physician of the soul, one whose holy function shall cause you to see your sins in their true light when you have opened them out before him, and thus help you to genuine compunction because of them; one whose experience of souls, whose sealed lips, whose sense of his own infirmities, shall make him the wisest and safest and most compassionate of confidants; one also whose high office as ambassador for Christ enable him to give you God's pardon, not man's pardon, which does not merely reconcile but renews with the robe of righteousness, the ring which reunites to Christ, the shoes of readiness of zeal for God of the gospel of peace; pardon which will enable you to partake without fear the very Body and Blood of Christ, aye, pardon which makes all the angels in heaven to rejoice.—Rev. Arthur Ritchie, D.D.



THE RESURRECTION AND  
THE LIFE

There is a day in Spring  
When under all the earth the secret germs  
Begin to stir and glow before they bud.  
The wealth and festal pomp of mid-summer,  
Lie in the heart of that inglorious day  
Which no man names with blessing though its work  
Is blest of all the world.

Quoted by DEAN CHURCH.



## CHAPTER XV

### "I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE"

"To declare the fact of the Resurrection was the first function of the Evangelist; to embody the doctrine of the Resurrection is the great office of the Church; to learn the meaning of the Resurrection is the task not of one age only, but of all."

These trenchant words of Bishop Westcott sum up in what way we are to look upon the sentence "The third day He rose again from the dead." "If Christ be not risen" said Saint Paul, and he is speaking of the bodily Resurrection of our LORD, "If Christ be not risen, your Faith is vain." It is well to recall that these decisive words form one the first statements of recorded Christianity. They were given to the world from twenty to forty years before the Gospels were written. All the records of the Apostolic times harmonize with this ultimatum of St. Paul. When one was to be chosen in place of Judas it was in order that he might "be a witness with us

of His Resurrection.” The sum of the sermon on the Day of Pentecost was “This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.” When the Holy Ghost came down upon them one thing followed above all others that “with great power gave the Apostles witness of the Resurrection of the LORD Christ.” When on Mars Hill the Athenians mocked it was because of “the Resurrection from the Dead.”

The dream of St. Paul’s life was to know “the power of the Resurrection” and he gathers up the hope of life eternal into the words, “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the LORD Jesus, and shall believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the Dead, thou shalt be saved.” “If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain.” This earliest voice of the faith rings still in our ears, with its loud challenge to face, and measure, without flinching the great issue that is ever before us. How sharply it pierces our souls, as we stand puzzled and distressed by all the sore anxieties which beset the discussions which have busied themselves with the origin of the Christian religion.”\* Tender and as sacred

\* Canon Scott Holland.

as are the memories of our LORD's earthly life this fact stands out clearly—that His earthly life was insufficient to found and create a new Religion—much was promised but little was fulfilled. There was the promise of a wide world Kingdom and of a Church nothing could destroy, but with the raising of the Cross, with the “King” nailed upon it, the gates of hell seemed to prevail and the Kingdom was in dust. To His followers standing afar off memories were not inspiring; some score of months together; “and these months had been months not of gathering success or of steady assurance, but months of failure, months of confusion, months of ever darkening disaster; months of flight or of desertion, of dreary pause, of disheartening suspense, of blind misunderstanding, of impenetrable mystery.” Had there been no Resurrection from the dead, had there been no transcendent Easter Day then our Religion would have been in vain and would have died the death of all things that have not God behind it. “If the Resurrection be not true in the same sense in which the Passion is true, then Death still remains the great conqueror. As far as all experience goes, no pledge has been given

of his defeat. A splendid guess, an extinguishable desire alone have sought to pierce the darkness beyond the tomb, if Jesus has not (as we believe), borne our human nature into the presence of God.”† Some of the reasons why we believe in the Resurrection are as follows. There are four separate and distinct accounts. This is plain from the differences between them. They could not have been written in collusion or derived from one another and yet so many discrepancies remain. On the other hand it is not to be believed that four persons sitting down to write an account of *What never occurred* could bring out stories that agree in so many details as well as upon the centre fact. Not being made up independently nor in collusion it follows they were not made up at all but are the true relation of facts as they occurred.

The Gospel accounts of the Resurrection are further marked with great naturalness and simplicity—said Dr. Furness, a learned Unitarian scholar, therefore not a prejudiced witness. “Nothing can exceed in artlessness and simplicity the four accounts of the first

† Bishop Westcott.

appearance of Jesus after His Crucifixion.” There is further the unintentional evidence of accidental details. Two of the Gospels for instance record that our LORD was not at first recognized by His Disciples. No man making up the story would have dared put in a statement of this kind but the writers of the Gospels give it because they want to give just what occurred regardless of consequences. Again when word is brought that He has risen from the Dead two of His Disciples hurry to the tomb. One outruns the other and coming to the tomb does not enter—the other following enters at once. How and in entire keeping with his character is the reverent reserve of St. John and in contrast the outspoken and impetuous St. Peter. The Gospels are filled with instances of this kind, the Consummate Artist being the Holy Ghost. There is no question but that the Apostles made the Resurrection the corner stone of their creed, that they lived for it and that all but one died for it and that this last one was willing to die for it. Men never die for what they believe false or for what they believe a fraud.

Moreover nothing can explain the moral

transformation of the disciples but the Resurrection. We see them at the Cross broken and demoralized. St. Peter has denied Him with curses, even the loved disciple has fled away. He is left "alone," absolutely "alone." Every promise of triumph is at an end. "There was darkness over all the land." Then in a few days the whole face of things has changed. The cowardly becomes the brave—the fearful the strong and true unto death. Nothing could have changed Saturday to Sunday but the Resurrection. The Jews were the most conservative people of the world. Saturday—the Sabbath was sacred to their nation by most solemn ties and association. Christianity crossed the seventh over into the first day of the week because of the Resurrection and ever since has held a Service on that day "to their great and endless comfort."

The proofs of the authenticity and truthfulness of the Gospels are overwhelming but for the moment we pass them by. The critics admit four of the letters of St. Paul are genuine. These letters were written before the Gospels—all of them assume the Resurrection was a fact. One of them—the

letter to the Church at Corinth, gives the clearest and fullest statement of the number who saw the risen Christ after His Resurrection from the Dead. These all have "fallen asleep" but their testimony lives on—upon it the Church is built—upon it "we look for the Resurrection of the dead and the Life of the world to come."

"Surely, in our love for the sweet memory of our Lord on earth, a Man among us so tender and so strong, we forget how it would have looked if nothing had ever followed; how terribly short and swift its passage; how small and unstable its actual achievement! Nothing in that brief Life, taken by itself, can account for Christian belief in the Lord or for the creation of the Church. It is the Resurrection which alone gave constructive force to the Life that lay behind it. A vision of unutterable beauty, indeed, that Life would ever have been; but a vision that came and passed and vanished before men's bewildered eyes had had time to secure it, or their hearts to apprehend what was there, for a fleeting moment, in their midst. A few deep, incomparable words would have lingered about



their memories; a few marvellous hours would never be forgotten, in which the sick had known the touch of power, and sorrow and sighing had all fled away. Some dozen men and a knot of women would have nursed a sick and fading secret, low buried in their silent souls—the secret of what once they had believed, as, in the tranced mystery of one historic evening, they had heard a quiet voice in their ears, which said, “Take, eat; This is My Body. Do this in memory of Me.”

But the very memory of this high promise, of this passing vision, far from driving them forth on a victorious mission, could but break their hearts with despair, as they recalled the utter and absolute ruin in which it had been so swiftly engulfed!

In the Resurrection, it was not the Lord only Who was raised from the dead. His Life on earth rose with Him; it was lifted up into its real light. That which had been but a suggestion, but a fragment, but a disappointment, but a failure, won, for the first time, out of the Resurrection a force that gave it significance and cohesion. The Spirit had come upon it; and that which had been all partial and piecemeal now first cohered



together and showed itself substantial, and became a living thing. Now, first, the promises gained reality, the vision became concrete, the symbolic acts obtained solid footing, the deep words lost their shadowy, intangible remoteness. A light flashed back from Easter morning, and poured daylight on what had been so dark. The events that had seemed so tangled and confusing now strung themselves together on a clear and comprehensible method. The cue was given, and all was intelligible.”—Canon Scott Holland, in “On Behalf of Belief.”



# LIFE AND ITS MYSTERY

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust;  
Thou madest man, he knows not why;  
He thinks he was not made to die;  
And thou hast made him; Thou art just.

## CHAPTER XVI

### LIFE AND ITS MYSTERY

WHAT is the meaning of life? Has it any meaning? Is there anything behind the blind forces that drive man on to his end? Is it possible to clear the mystery—the profound mystery of man's existence here with the deeper mystery of all that may yet come?

The comfort of the Catholic Faith lies in the fact that it makes clear all mystery and meets the profoundest problems of life. Put in the fewest words the answer is that God Himself is in the midst of things. It seems indeed that chaos and tragedy are on every side but if God Himself is in the midst of it no final harm can come. There for instance is sin at the door of every man's life marring the beauty, staining the fair face, blood poisoning the heart of things.

What can save us from its guilt; what can deliver us from its pollution? Lady Macbeth,

walking through the lone watches of the night and slowly going mad because she could not wash white her red right hand, is but the way the immortal dramatist expresses that moan of humanity which the Greek sums up in brief words: "God may forgive sin, but I do not know why He should." Christianity answers simply and completely Plato's doubt, and tells us why God may and does forgive sin: "They shall call His name Jesus because He shall save His people from their sins."

The Catholic Faith gives the only satisfying answer to the fact that God is good, and yet that the world is filled with sorrow—sorrow in all its myriad forms, not simply the pain and want and misery of body which fills the land, but that deeper sorrow of bereavement which breaks the happy home, which takes the sunshine out of the world and makes us walk softly all our days; and then that deepest of all sorrow where it is felt—the memory of moral and spiritual failure, that recreancy of trust, that dereliction of duty, that desertion of our Lord, the memory of which drove Saint Peter out in desolation of spirit to weep bitterly, that unrest and overwhelming dismay of the soul that filled the

hearts of thoughtful men until our Lord taught them the way to God the Father and that in the way of the Cross there was peace.

The Catholic Faith gives the only satisfying answer to the loneliness of life. Here and there you find men so profoundly ignorant of themselves as to be satisfied with their own companionship, but even the ordinary man who thinks at all feels the solitude of his existence—the coming separation from all he holds dear. He is strangely lonely as to time—millions of ages lie back of him, millions of centuries, it would seem, lie ahead of him. He is lonely as to space, no one is able even to dream how long is that path the earth has travelled with the sun in its journey to that part of the heavens toward which it sweeps, and who can measure even in thought how long the journey is yet to be? It is this utter loneliness in time and space which forces the cry: “Out of the deep have I called unto Thee, O Lord: Lord hear my prayer.” Even in relation to this world his loneliness is extreme. He is but one in countless millions, and to the great mass of humanity his deepest joys and profoundest sorrows are as nothing—his struggle for existence against the forces

of nature have to be fought alone. In his moral and spiritual battle against the forces of the world, the flesh and the devil, the fight at the last is alone. Above all other things he craves love and companionship, but he cannot live even a hundred years without death cutting away every love he has, however tender and sacred—and, even if he dies earlier in the hundred years, he has to die alone—absolutely alone.

The Catholic Faith believes there is no such desolation. No one is alone in the whole universe. There is no place so far but Christ is there. There was no time, past or present, of which He is not a part. There is no one so poor and wretched but is known to Him who once Himself had no place to lay his head. There is no one so rich but of him it may be written as of old: "Jesus loved him." There is no one so deep and far gone in sin but in penitence may hear again those merciful words: "Neither do I condemn thee—go and sin no more."

Rising above the world, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, stands the Catholic Faith. It faces the sin, the sorrow and the solitude of human life. It faces the august



forces of Eternity and says: "There is One Who Cares and Who forever will care for you. Let not your heart be troubled—neither let it be afraid."



# THE LIFE EVERLASTING

I feel my immortality o'ersweep  
All pain, all tears, all time, all fears, and peal  
Like the eternal thunder of the deep  
Into my ears this truth—thou livest forever.

LORD BYRON.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE LIFE EVERLASTING

IN one of the most thoughtful books of the day \* a chapter begins "Faith in Immortality better than knowledge of it." The writer then goes on to show that faith in the love and goodness of God the Father means far more than the mere material proof of a life to come. After long study of "Evidences" and wide searchings for "proofs" this is the proof we rest upon at last—the love and goodness of God.

It was in the quiet Autumn evening when his earthly life was drawing to its close that Daniel Webster said, "Thank God for that Gospel which brought life and immortality to light." It was the man who wrote the character of Little Paul, who watching the

\* "Life Beyond Life," by the Rev. Charles Lewis Slatery, D.D.

golden ripple on the wall and the coming of that old, old fashioned, death, that said "Thank God all who see it, for that older fashion yet of Immortality."

The question whether the Life Everlasting is the passing dream of a tender heart or an eternal reality great and sure as God himself rests with the answer you give to the question "If a man die, shall he live again?" For, to prove immortality, one does not need to show that the existence which follows human life is everlasting. All the human soul asks is to be shown that there is any existence after that cold and rigid stillness called Death.

If by the Resurrection of our LORD or by the power of any other sufficient cause it can be shown our resurrection is an absolute certainty, then it requires no strain upon faith or even upon reason to hold that the raised life shall live forever, for the life that can conquer but for a single day the leaden earthiness of death, the life that can but a single moment look down and hear the dull thuds of those clods which fall upon the wooden case about its own dead body has nothing more to fear, it has crossed the dead line and

escaped every shot that can possibly be fired, it has reached the life of God, the life which having had no beginning cannot possibly have any ending. The only vital question then is not, shall a man live forever, but if a man die "Shall he live again?" even for one short day. Job's question, therefore, even in this narrow sense, is the one above all others of intense and awful interest. Other questions there have been of momentous importance in other times and other places and to other Beings but for man none from out the great eternity of God of such tragic and tremendous moment as this one of the Patriarch of Uz—"If a man die, shall he live again?"

We know that many have taught, no doubt with ideas of humility and reverence, that the only question of transcendent importance is the glory of God. But the glory of God is a calm and perfect certainty whether man come or go, whether he live for a season or die eternally.

The attributes of God shows this is true. God is infinite. You go into the depths of the world, into hell itself and God is there. You take the wings of the morning and go to the ends of the earth and the farthest limit,

of sea and mountain and God is there. Your mind flies to the distant planet or to that sun whose light has been sweeping toward us for countless years, and God is there. You close your eyes and with hand upon your tired head try to dream of some limit, some stopping place, but every point chosen necessarily supposes some infinite wall or space beyond, and at last your power of conception your power of imagination, however grand and brilliant, loses itself or fearing to be swallowed up in the eternal billows of an infinite sea rushes back to your individuality hushed and abashed.

Think for a moment also of the eternity of God. Time, the few centuries of the world seem long to us, Abraham standing in the grey morn of history seems to us a dream of some Hebrew poet. But "before Abraham was" said the Divine One "I am." The research of Science has shown us in these later days that not centuries simply but unnumbered ages of growth and dissolution, then of growth again. But before all this was God. Before the tangled chaos of a universe, not to think of the void and darkness of an earth, before all these was God. And if we attempt



to form the future, the thought is just as futile, the conception is impossible. Yea, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Such is the glory of God, such is the wisdom, power, justice, holiness and truth of a spiritual Being who forever must of necessity be infinite, eternal and unchangeable. We say, therefore, in all reverence the one question above all others in existence is not the glory of God, for that has been, is, and must forever be a fact, whether a man die eternally or whether he die and live again.

Nor is the subject of death a question of any particular debate. The slow or sudden stoppage of existence, the narrowness, the incompleteness, the fragmentariness of life is a truth realized by all thinking persons. Toward the narrow door of death and the darkness beyond move all the millions of the race, nor does any one deny or hinder the fact. Little babe and aged Patriarch, warrior and civilian, society girl and house maid, all are going the same way. There is no dispute here nor gainsaying of that which is so beyond peradventure. Death, like the glory of God, is a calm, perfect and inevitable certainty, the only question is whether after

some Good Friday there is in reality for those who wait for it any meaning in the Day called Easter.

Neither is the important question of existence one of this world or of this life. Sometimes men try to make it seem so. While the blood flows easily and the heart has not been too often discouraged, while it is yet morning and the sun has neither scorched nor cast lengthening shadows over the landscape, men may say life is enough. No one denies either that the world has its attractions. A stately pageant indeed is the courtly world moving in grand procession, heavy and costly are the folds of her sweeping train hiding her sin and sorrow and squalor, a little gold but more tinsel, fair enough in the light of a society which only sins privately or respectably, but very worn and sallow and shallow in the light of a God who knoweth all things—for from out the Great Unknown moves ever to cross and re-cross this worldly pageant that other procession which cries earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. Truly the world passeth away and the lust thereof. Man goeth to his long home and the mourners go about the streets, and the only

question of real interest still is this. "If a man die shall he live again?"

Some in these latter times have tried to comfort us with what they called a corporate immortality, that is an immortality of a certain age, or nation or family and not of the individual. Now this is all well enough to dream about, it sounds self-denying, even heroic to let one's personality be used for the filling up and levelling, so to speak, of say the nineteenth century, but it is so uncomfortably like one's own funeral that is to say the least it is not a cheerful thought. The question with each man still is this: "If *I* die, shall *I* live again?" Shall *I* live again—that is it—for in all God's universe there is no more inconceivably awful thought than annihilation. Purgatory, hell—these ideas are nothing compared to the belief that we are to drown eternally in a sea which can never give up its dead, all that dear to us, to blot out in shame and sham, in ignominy and deception never before or after equalled, to blot out and blast every line of that Divine Character which said "I am the Resurrection and the Life, whosoever believeth in Me hath everlasting life and I will raise him up at the

last day.” Surely if the dead rise not and we are never again to see the glory of the Autumn sky nor hear again the soft music of the Summer wind nor feel the balmy fragrance of the dying Spring time, then we are never to hope again, never to work again, never to love again. Truly, great Apostle, if this be the end of all, then are we men most miserable; if for the cry of the human heart there remains but chaos and disintegrating ruin, then let us say with Coleridge “Be sad, be glad, be neither, seek or shun. Thou hast no reason why, Thou canst have none. Thy being’s Being is contradiction.”

After all if the present be satisfied, what does the world care what becomes of the future. “Cannot a man be happy and yet believe in nothing?” Yes, as an infant is happy, a babe has no appreciation of the mighty past nor the majestic glory of an eternal future. All the baby asks is to be fed and to be amused and not to have its sleep too abruptly broken. It is quite as content to play in the mud as on a velvet carpet, it neither reads nor thinks nor speaks any sense till many days have been added to its existence, the dim memory of transient pain

may keep it out of the fire, but it has no real idea of danger nor of responsibility—call such a being happy if you please, but in grade and comparison with mature and certain faith in immortality it is but the happiness of the rich man's horse; the rich man's horse stands in his padded stall, he is fed and groomed, harnessed and driven, while youth allows him to remain handsome and spirited. After that he is sold to the poor man and dies halt and broken, a poor man's horse. Happy is the rich man's horse we will admit, because he does not know nor trouble about his future, but his happiness is a kind not worth the dead weeds on which dies the poor man's horse, the horse than once was rich.

Now suppose a man is moved to stir himself out of his child life or out of his mere animal existence and to seriously meditate upon life's great question, "If a man die shall he live again," it is remarkable how many objections he will allow to have weight with him which really ought not to have any force at all.

Let but one be named. Men say for instance that they cannot believe in immortality because it is something they cannot grasp or

comprehend. How strange an excuse is this when we consider that comparatively nothing can be understood when traced back to its ultimate cause. Life itself, who can say what it is. It is not the bones, nor the muscles, nor the nerves, nor the physical identity, back within these there runs a mysterious something called will, mind or spirit, and no one knows what that is or how it acts upon and controls the body. No one knows mathematically, absolutely whence it came, or whether it is going, and yet all men believe in life. They believe in that which they can neither explain or comprehend. To any one who has studied astronomy or indeed any science there comes moments when the immensity of facts to be handled can but fill with solemn awe. The unnumbered worlds sweeping with incalculable speed through the infinite space, about suns that are moving themselves around some unknown satellite, stars coming and going no one knows whither. All these are facts commonly admitted but not mathematically proven nor understood by one in ten thousand believing the same. We need not go so far away. Take the facts and use of electricity. What is it? No man

can say, but no sane man denies it. What is light? No one knows, but every one believes in light. What is the power opposite to the power of gravitation? No one knows yet there is some such force.

It comes to this then, that heaven and earth are full of facts beyond our comprehension, but none the less facts for that. It becomes, therefore, worthy of remark that immortality is beyond all ordinary earthly evidences, for the reason that it sweeps beyond all that is merely human and mortal, beyond all that is earthly. In certain parts of the ocean the waters are unfathomable, the heavy lead, though it strikes no bottom stands as it were in mid-air. Science has shown that beyond a certain depth nothing has been ever known to go—the heaviest metal will, because of the density of the waters stand at that line. What, how far it is beyond that line, God, He alone knows, but that there is a beyond a sweep of water deeper and farther reaching than the still line of the grey old ocean is a fact no intelligent man denies. In the same way beyond all human ken sweeps this solemn, grand and awful fact of Immortality. No man has ever measured this eternalness



because it cannot be measured, no man has ever strictly, literally speaking, ever proven the existence of this Immortality, because it is a fact not to be sized by feet and inches, by days and hours or by metres and millimetres.

It is no proof then against Immortality that a man cannot reduce his proof for it, to a syllogism, to an algebraic axiom. The child that is to be born to-morrow surely knows nothing of the life into which it is about to enter, but it will certainly be born and will certainly live; so a man will pass at death into another life though to-day he cannot give the least positive evidence of that after life. Those who have visited Niagara will remember the lovely rainbow which spans the Falls, a bridge of heavenly colors, but the waters which reflect that rainbow are forever changing, some day when the waters have worn the rocks of Niagara down the rainbow will disappear from human sight but not from God's sight for the rich and exquisite color of that bow came not from the changing waters, but from that sun which will shine when human life has become extinct. And some day when the color of your face,



the light of your eye and the well known look of your features have become a blank because of the falling, dying body, you will not be dead. The light of God called life which for a little shone from your body will but have returned to that Sun, to that Eternal Light from whence in the beginning it came forth. Of this was Wordsworth thinking when he said:

There shines through our earthly dresse  
Bright shoots of everlasting nesse.

So passes from human sight the most popular objection of modern unbelief, the objection that we are not to believe what we cannot analytically understand. In proportion as such objections are weak you find the positive evidences for immortality cogent and powerful. The one evidence above all others is the Resurrection of our Lord. It is sufficient for our present purpose merely to recall that the evidence for the Resurrection is the most conclusive of any fact in ancient history. If what are commonly called Christian evidences are ruled out of the court, then with the sweep of your hand you can

wipe out all history. Caesar is but a myth, Dante but a vision and the Crusades but a Canterbury tale. Deny as unanswerable the Christian evidences and the martyrs are but a dream, the Saints but mental rhapsodies, the sacred wars but vapors and vagaries and the historic Church but a romance mingled with "such stuff as dreams are made of."

We do not say that these evidences, however unanswerable, however cogent insure faith or belief in a life to come, far from it. Faith is a gift of God to be had by those who ask for it and who use the means of Grace He has appointed. It is a matter of willing will, for no man can be convinced against his will, it is matter of character, for unless a man earnestly wish to fulfill his duty and serve God, no evidence possible can give him faith. Angels and Archangels could not make a blind prejudiced man see a world as large as Jupiter. It was true in the past, it must forever be true of the man who daily and deliberately sins against the light that such a man would not be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

From what has been said, let no one however be led to think disparagingly of those

logical and historical facts which carry before them an intellectual but not necessarily a spiritual assent to the truth. When in the goodness of God Faith has been given us, these evidences are very helpful to strengthen and confirm this faith, so helpful are they that it is the duty of all good Christians to study these evidences and not be the religious sciolists so many people allow themselves not only to be, but to remain. Blown about by every wind of doctrine are these poor people not having an answer to give for the reason of the hope that is in them. So helpful are these evidences that the venture to recall some mental states of being not so ordinarily adduced as arguments for a life to come.

The very desire itself for Immortality is a proof of its coming fulfillment. All other desires of mind, body and soul have been gratified in some degree. God has given food and drink for the body, colors for the eye, melody for the ear, the flower and all redolence for the scent, the delicacy for the taste, the sensitive skin for the touch, canvas and all nature for the painter, the marble for the sculptor, music for the artist, the waving field for the farmer, the cattle upon the hill

for the herdsman. In this way we might go on through all desires, through all passions whether love or friendship, ambition or emulation and we would find for each some gratification. God in his mercy may not always give us all that for which we pray, because like children we often ask for what would do us harm, nor do we attempt to explain why some never get their desire. God knows best not we, but this is only certainly true that for every wish, want or appetite there is some gratification if it be best for us. Now it would be a most strange and inexplicable phenomenon if this desire for Immortality, a desire old and deep as mankind, a desire universal as humanity, a desire more divine and Godlike than all other, it would, we say, be strange and utterly inexplicable if such a desire was never to be answered, such an ambition never to be gained, such a holy and reverent hope never to be fulfilled. Dreaming this truth no doubt was Tennyson when he wrote:

My own dim life shall teach me this,  
That life shall live forever more,  
Else earth is darkness at the core,  
And dust and ashes all that is.

There is another pledge and earnest of our Immortality in the fact of our origin. St. Paul quoting the heathen said "even your own poet has written 'We are God's offspring.' " We came out from God in the belief of all intelligent notions, is it not most natural to suppose we will return to Him? We do not forget that some have taught we were evolved from monkeys of high and low degree. This belief needs no other answer than the severe but deserved handling which Carlyle gave it. It needs no other answer than that universal feeling of humanity saying with Wordsworth:

The soul that rises with us, our life star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar;  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come,  
From God, who is our home.

Surely these words are true, and there can be nothing more probable than that the God who gave birth, who breathed into our nostrils the breath of life, in whose Divine image we were made, surely this Holy God

if we wish it, if we ask it will not allow our life to be destroyed.

Or cast as rubbish to the void  
When He hath made the Pile complete.

Consider another proof of Immortality. It is a subtle evidence, full of strangeness and mystery, but none the less a most forcible evidence. It is in the indescribable, inexpressible feeling that sometimes comes to any life of any depth when under certain excitements. A woman feels it when suddenly the love of her life lies dead, a man feels it going into battle. It is enthusiasm which follows the pale shiver of the first fear of actual conflict, an ordinary life may feel it under the mystic magnetism of eloquent oratory, or when under the charm of magnificent music. Any one may feel it when in a room alone with a dead body or when going through a Churchyard at sunset or at night. It is the voice of the absent, it is the breath of our good angel, it is the intimation of our Immortality.

It is not unknown that all which has been said is denied by many. Men often hope by denying a hereafter to feel easier in the

license they have taken. They hope by denying God to get away from the mysterious and unexplainable, but when a man denies God and the life to come, he increases the mystery and contradiction tenfold. It is easier to suppose that the broken type which have been pitched into the printer's hell will strike off of themselves some epic poem than to presume that this world came by chance. It is easier to suppose, all things considered, that the past was but a fancy of a fool than that the future of the human race and of all God's universe is to end in confused nothingness. Our daily life is a daily miracle, yet men go up and down the land complaining about the improbability and the impossibility of the miraculous. They want a God and religion of reason, they say, and they mean by reason what their small minds can measure. A pretty God these men would give the world, a God of humanity, as they call him, who would chop wood and plough the fields, a God who would ask men's advice and attend the latest school of Philosophy, a God of whom it might be said in the satire of Elijah "Pray louder, for he is a God; either he is talking or he is pursuing, or he is on a



journey or peradventure, he sleepeth and must be awakened.”

Far different from the tone of the men whom Elijah so effectively obliterated was the spirit of those characters in history who were truly great. The thinkers who claim that independence and transcendence of mind which will not allow them to herd intellectually with women and children seem never to have heard of Isaiah and Saint Paul, nor to have read Dante and Shakespeare, nor to have known Webster and Lincoln, Wellington and Washington, nor to have heard of Bacon and Galileo, O’Connell and Burke, Raphael and Angelo, Marco Polo and Columbus, Mozart and Beethoven, Thorwaldsen and Millet, Irving and Thackeray, Louis of Germany, Louis IX of France and Albert of England. These souls that towered so high above the plane of ordinary humanity were Christians, all of them, and believers in Immortality. Therefore with men who have nothing new, only that which is old and tried, only the Faith once delivered to the saints, we take our stand for life or for death and when you ask us “if a man die shall he live again” we answer in the name of fiction and



poetry, in the name of eloquence and philosophy, in the name of art and discovery, in the name of science and religion, in the name of instinct which cries to heaven and conscience which never lies, in the name of humanity which waits, and in the name of the Creator who will keep His word we answer:

“I believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord; I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness of sins; the Resurrection of the body, and the Life Everlasting, Amen.”

People sometimes say that they wish that the proof of immortality could be made so concrete, so materialistic, that even the most skeptical soul would be compelled to trust the fact. People sometimes dare to criticize the ways of God, because, though He has put us in a world where happiness and sorrow mingle, and where the sadness often seems impenetrable, He has not demonstrated to us exactly what the compensations of the future life will be. We long to hear the voice, to see the face, to feel the hand. However faint the voice, however dim the face, however slight

the touch upon the hand, such revelation of reality would be knowledge. Instead, God gives us faith. He tells us, through Christ, to believe that His promises fulfilled will be better than anything that we can desire or pray for.

So we come to the very centre of religion. Better than all material confirmation of immortality is the implicit trust in God. By a great, authoritative act, God has revealed to us His bidding that we believe in immortality. He asks us to trust Him. Immortality is one of the ineradicable desires of the human spirit. God asks us to trust him for that. Better than all wisdom, better than all knowledge, is this high trust in God for all that is most precious and intimate.

Many questions about the Life to Come must remain unanswered. But as faith grows firm, we care little for the haze. For faith shows us the outlines of ineffable joy. We are content to wait. Always will our best thought be less than the reality. We dream of the glorified Christ, and how we shall

Take His hand and go with Him  
To the deep wells of light.

But He must be such friend and King as we never dared to hope. As tired children lay their heads against a loving father, so we cease to question and to tremble, and we trust our immortality to our eternal Father, God.—LIFE BEYOND LIFE, by the Rev. Charles Lewis Slattery, D.D.











Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 01018 7625